Winter Issue 2025/6
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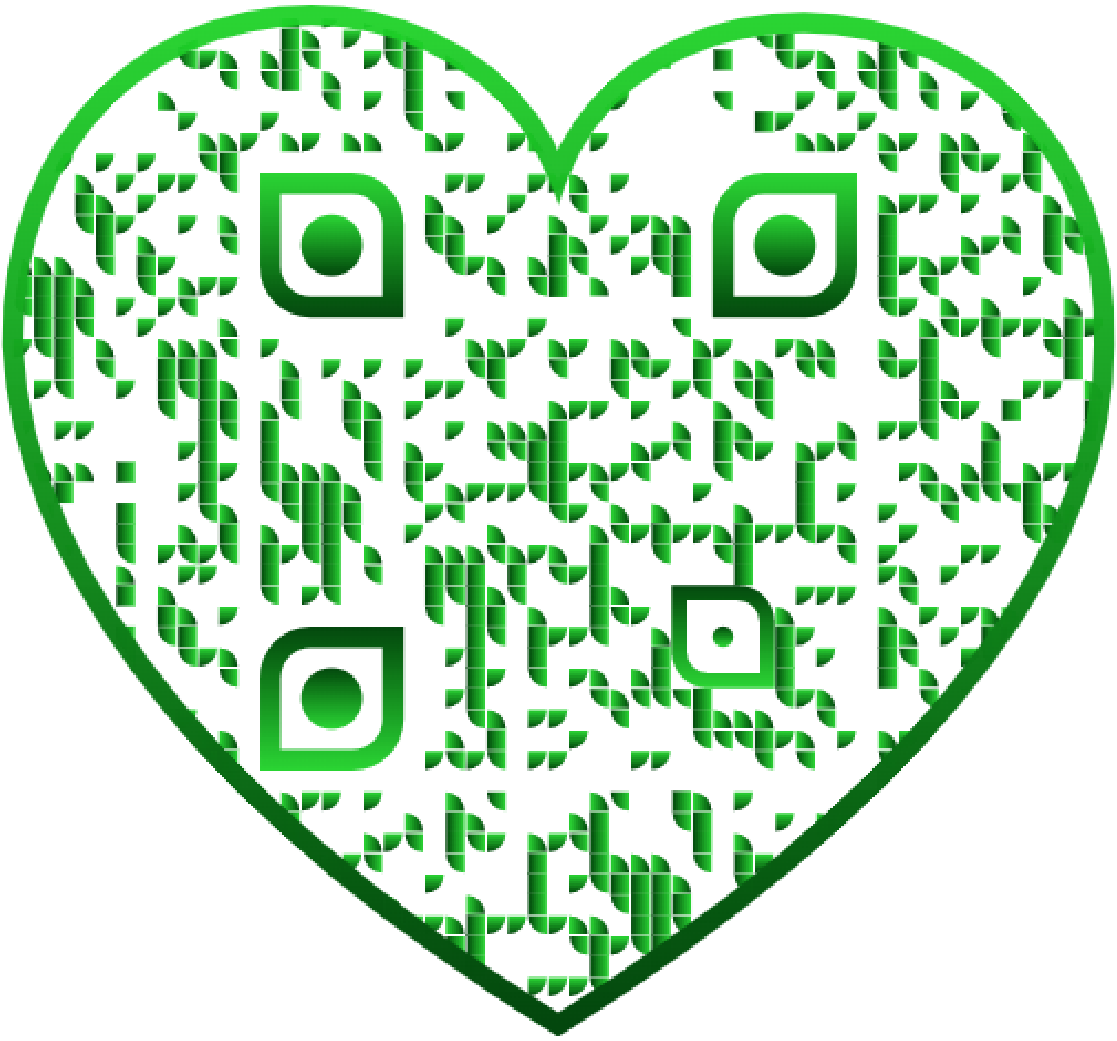

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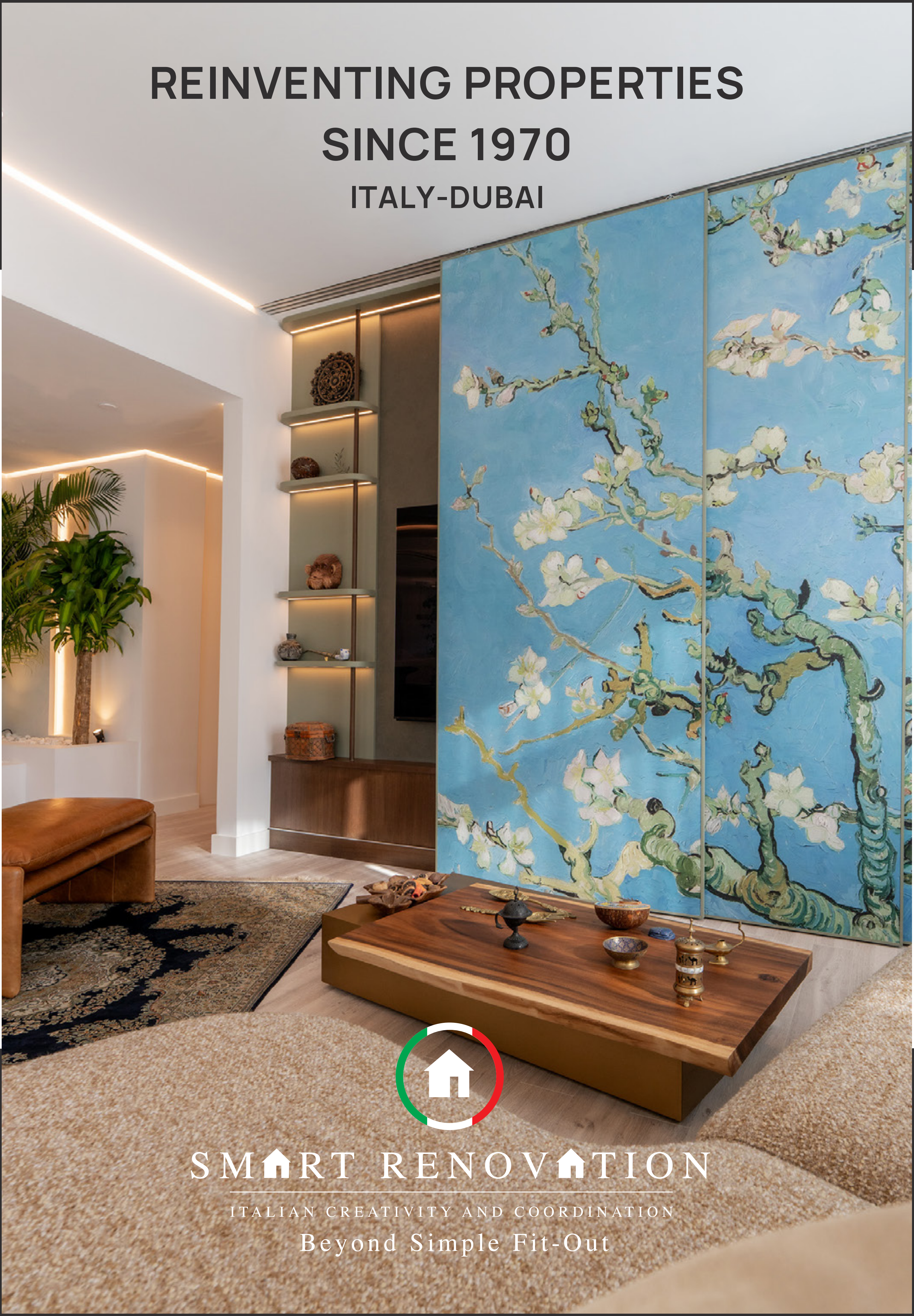

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Floor Lamp
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Good Taste Deserves Better Lighting

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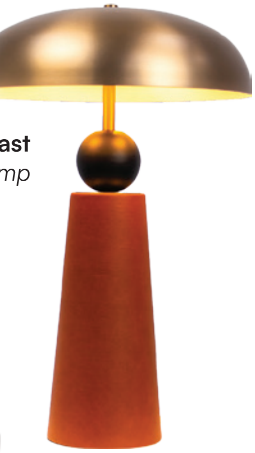

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Frosted Glass
Pendant Light

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Smart Renovation

Welcome to the issue

We're wrapping up 2025 and looking ahead to a new year with a closer look at global interior design themes and local trends. As always, we speak with leading designers and homeowners, and open the doors to an exclusive selection of Dubai homes, each offering a distinct interiors perspective. Insider tips and ideas from a top UAE interior design expert appear in our popular Masterclass section (page 11). And with home entertaining in mind, we explore the art of tablescaping for your next event (page 26). Winter is the perfect time to enjoy the outdoors with an East African-inspired al fresco makeover in Arabian Ranches 2 (page 28) and a heart-filled open-plan family home in The Meadows (page 42). Thinking about your next move? Learn more about Dubai's real estate outlook and explore some of betterhomes' most sought-after properties (page 70). Happy reading!

Visit us at blivinguae.com and follow us on Instagram at @blivinguae

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Masterclass

In this section, industry expert Anam Clarke, founder of The Designers' Studio (*@thedesignersstudiouae*) shares tips, advice and insider information to make you the master of your home

STYLING TIPS

Add a bright splash of colour and character to your kitchen

ROOM RECIPE

Four ways to transform a hallway from functional to fabulous

HOW TO MASTER

Bring vintage inspiration into the 21st century with a tutorial in period styling

ASK THE EXPERT

Top tips for creating a harmonious connection between your home and garden

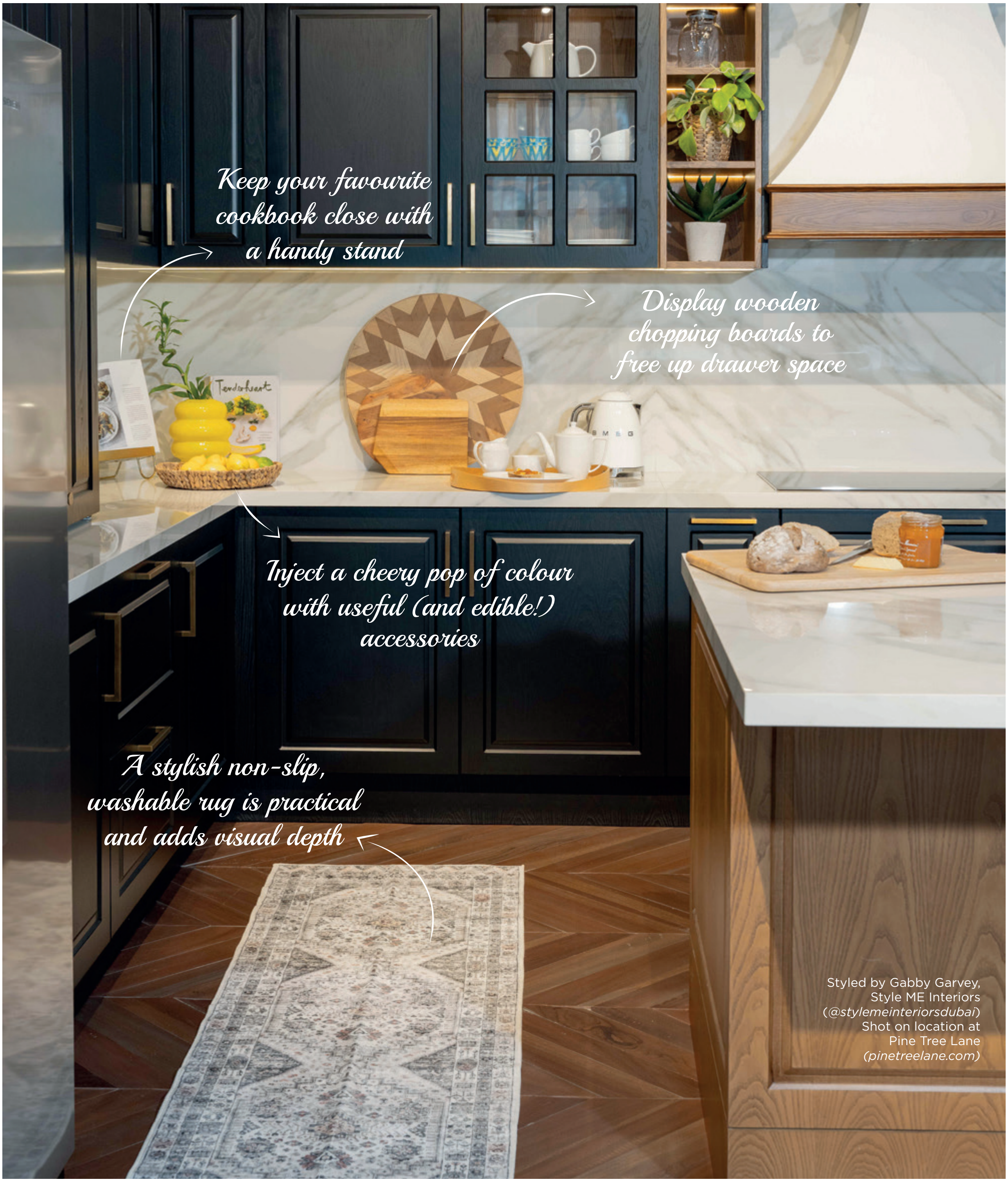
LITTLE BLACK BOOK

Anam's favourite destinations for dazzling dinner and party ware

Styling Tips

Kitchen feels

Add character to the heart of the home



Keep your favourite cookbook close with a handy stand

Display wooden chopping boards to free up drawer space

Inject a cheery pop of colour with useful (and edible!) accessories

A stylish non-slip, washable rug is practical and adds visual depth

Styled by Gabby Garvey,
Style ME Interiors
(@stylemeinteriorsdubai)
Shot on location at
Pine Tree Lane
(pinetreelane.com)

Room Recipe

Make a grand entrance

Four ways to transform a functional hallway into a fabulous first impression

Image credits: 1 CB2; 2 The Wood Veneer Hub; 3 Bloomr; 4 Home Kode

WOW WALLS

Add a striking wall treatment to create a characterful arrival moment in what is traditionally a transitional space. Vertical panels or an accent colour draw the eye down the length of the space to deliver a sense of depth and height while your chosen finish sets the style tone for the rest of the home.
Check out: The Wood Veneer Hub, *thewoodveneerhub.ae*, for inviting textural tongue and groove panelling solutions; Benjamin Moore's collection of rich, jewelled paint colours, available at SAS Express, Al Quoz, Dubai, *04 453 1097*

LIGHTEN UP

Good lighting is a non-negotiable to lift up a narrow or deep hallway, while mirrors amplify light and visually widen the corridor, making it feel more welcoming. A dimmable chandelier makes a strong statement and layered lighting also adds mood but remember to think functional as well as decorative as this is a practical space.
Check out: *homekode.com* for modern backlit mirrors, and more; boho, classic, and contemporary pendant inspiration at *next.ae*

FAB FUNCTION

Furniture pieces should be design-led and usable as hallways are the de facto destination for storage (coats, keys, shoes) but can easily feel cluttered. The right pieces create a purposeful landing area with built-in lower cabinetry, wall-mounted hooks and benches supremely practical. Materials, finishes, textures, and décor elevate utility into style-focused design.
Check out: Upholstered benches that are super stylish yet soft from Kanaba Home, *kanabahome.com*; distinctive high-quality consoles and benches from CB2, *cb2.ae*

TABLE IT

Space permitting, a small round pedestal table provides purpose in what is often an overlooked area and breaks up the usual straight lines to add flow and balance. Dress with a sculptural plant or floral arrangement for life and warmth and pop a rug underneath in a nod to luxury lobby styling.
Check out: Fabulous faux floral tabletop arrangements, plants, and vases can be found at Bloomr, *bloomr.com*; check out the exquisite sculptural art pieces at Ebarza, *ebarza.com*

How To Master

Vintage chic

WHAT IS IT?

In the interior design world, 'vintage' captures the allure of pieces lifted from earlier decades - often mid-20th century, sometimes older, and occasionally delightfully retro. Vintage pieces carry the softness of wear, the honesty of craftsmanship, and the quiet stories of their former homes. Unlike antiques or ornate period décor (think Bridgerton), vintage infuses soul without being overly formal and fits effortlessly into contemporary spaces while enriching them with history, texture, and lived-in charm.

ABOUT THE STYLE

To recreate the look, start by choosing a single era as your anchor, whether its 1960s cool or Art Deco glamour - so the space feels curated rather than costume-y. Let key vintage pieces, such as a sofa, sideboard, or standout lighting, take centre stage while keeping the surrounding elements clean and modern. Pair a classic, era-inspired palette with contemporary materials for balance, creating a lounge with soul, not a themed movie set.

HOW TO NAIL IT

Era inspiration. Art Deco, industrial vintage or mid-century modern, research typical furniture shapes, materials and colours from your favourite era and commit to the idea before hitting up the city's vintage haunts or online stores.

Statement pieces. Invest in one or two authentic or well-designed vintage pieces as focal anchors, a 1960s teak sideboard and vintage sunburst mirror, for example, then add a few strategic accents such as an old framed print or vintage rug.

Classic colours. Choose a base of neutral tones (cream, soft grey, taupe) for walls, carpets or large upholstery then layer in accent colours from your chosen era and metallic finishes to enrich the look, making your pieces pop.

Mix in modern. Balance vintage elements with modern furniture or finishes to keep things current; use contemporary lighting, as well as authentic lamps, for ambience and function; and keep clutter at bay to avoid your home looking like a museum.

Showcase textures. Let pieces featuring natural materials such as wood grain, brass, and leather shine, and layer with tactile textures for added authenticity. Mix smooth modern surfaces with rougher vintage ones for contrast but ensure age and wear look intentional not shabby.

Get personal. Don't forget to stamp your own personality - and history - on a space by selecting family heirlooms, vintage books, or thrifted treasures, to display and enjoy.

Clockwise from top: Art Deco vase, green velvet screen, Art Deco ceiling lamp, **cabinetofcuriosity.me**; Painting in frame, **antikadubai.com**; Chest of drawers, **labrocante.ae**; modern Najdi table, Mother-of-pearl inlaid chair, **original-antique.com**; hand carved mirror, **antikadubai.com**

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Outdoor inspiration

Your villa terrace, entertaining area, or even apartment balcony, is an extension of the home, but connecting them effortlessly isn't always simple. In this Q&A, Anam reveals practical, design-led tips for achieving a harmonious, indoor–outdoor flow.

How can you create flow between indoor living areas and outdoor spaces so they feel seamlessly connected?

The key to making outdoor spaces feel like a natural extension of your interior is continuity. The most charming and welcoming terraces, patios, or balconies blur the boundaries between inside and out - both visually and functionally.

Start by aligning floor levels and materials wherever possible. Using the same or similar flooring, for example, a porcelain tile that runs from the living room through to the terrace, creates instant flow. Even when material changes are necessary, maintaining the same tone or finish, such as microcement indoors and an anti-slip outdoor version outside, will help ensure the transition is cohesive.

Frameless sliding or telescopic doors are another essential investment. They allow light, air, and movement to effortlessly pass between zones, while maintaining a sense of openness year-round.

The final step is styling with intention. When your exterior palette echoes your interior - through shared colour notes, metal accents, or fabric details - the space feels curated as part of the home, not a separate environment.

For instance, if the living room has brushed brass accents and linen upholstery, mirror those finishes outdoors through brass lanterns, light-toned cushions, and textured weaves. Think of it as designing one continuous space with different moods, all speaking the same design language.

What design elements make the biggest difference in transforming small or larger outdoor spaces into cosy, inviting retreats?

Whether you're working with a generous terrace or the smallest city balcony, the transformation hinges on layering - the same principle used indoors to build depth and atmosphere.

Furniture sets the foundation, and its scale matters more than its physical size. Lightweight pieces, modular seating such as sectional sofas or ottomans that double as tables, and flexible layouts prevent compact spaces from feeling crowded.

Larger terraces, meanwhile, benefit from subtle zoning that defines distinct lounging, dining, and quiet reading areas without disrupting visual flow - think a dining nook or a lounge chair tucked beside greenery for a peaceful moment.

Lighting is one of the most powerful outdoor tools, able to shift mood instantly. Combine ambient festoon lights with task lamps and subtle accent lighting, such as uplighters in planters or under benches, to create layered warmth. Soft amber LED lanterns add a cosy glow on winter evenings.

Textiles further elevate comfort. Outdoor-rated rugs, cushions, and throws introduce inviting tactility and colour, softening harder architectural lines. When temperatures drop, a chunky knit throw adds instant snugness.

Greenery is transformative, especially when layered at different heights and textures. Mix ceramic, concrete, and rattan planters, and pair evergreens with flowering species. In the UAE, olive trees, bougainvillea, ficus, and jasmine thrive in a desert climate.

For cooler months, a fire pit extends outdoor living, while artwork, mirrors, and sculptural pieces bring personality, ensuring the space feels curated rather than staged.

How can you balance comfort and style outdoors while ensuring materials and décor choices are climate durable?

Designing for the UAE climate means embracing materials that withstand sun, sand, and humidity while still delivering the sophistication you expect indoors.

Start with resilient foundations: powder-coated aluminium, treated

teak, and high-quality synthetic rattan offer longevity without sacrificing style.

For upholstery, solution-dyed acrylic fabrics such as Sunbrella or Agora remain the gold standard, holding colour and resisting mould even in peak summer temperatures.

Tables and accents in terrazzo, outdoor ceramics, or sealed wood add texture while standing up to the elements. Practicality also lies in ease – removable cushion covers, washable fabrics, and summer storage all help maintain freshness year after year.

Style comes through thoughtful contrasts: refined silhouettes paired with tactile weaves, neutral bases elevated by seasonal highlights like terracotta, sage, or deep eucalyptus tones.

And the guiding principle? If a piece looks refined enough to sit indoors but is engineered for the outdoors, it's the perfect balance of comfort, durability, and design integrity for the region.

Image credits: Nikita Sahney, k4

Little Black Book

Fabulous finds

Anam's favourite destinations for dazzling dinner and party ware

Christofle

Whatever the season or reason, hosting a dinner party or planning a celebratory bash is the perfect excuse to bring out special occasion china and open the décor cupboard. But with most seasonal gatherings a once-yearly affair, do you splurge or save? Our go-to list of dining table hotspots is where you'll find stunning flatware and serving items guaranteed to elevate any event.

Roomours
Perfect for sourcing showstopper serving pieces or mixing it up with textures and finishes, this online repository of culinary goodies stocks flatware, serveware, stoneware, trays and other table-setting statement finds. *roomoursonline.com*

Souk Al Ras Cutlery & Flatware
Supremely affordable and with a bowl, serving dish, glass or tray for – literally - every occasion, the budget-friendly website is a fascinating treasure trove for basic through to fancy flatware that looks good but won't break the bank. *soukalras.ae*

Tramontina UAE
Shop online or pop to their Sharjah outlet store to peruse the flatware and stainless steel utensils in a choice of styles. Ideal for when you need extra pieces to complement a dinner theme or to add some wallet-friendly style. *Saih Shuaib 4, Dubai Industrial City, 052 691 4721, tramontinastore.ae*

La Brocante
Known for furniture, this fabulous warehouse hub is also a great place to pick up vintage, retro and preloved homeware, including serving dishes and table décor. Looking for a Lalique centrepiece or silver nutcracker? You could be in luck. *2 Street 18A, Al Quoz Industrial Area 4, 04 251 4080, labrocante.ae*

Assembly
A vintage concept store, the vibe is cool chic. Hang onto your credit card until you've spotted a sought-after entertaining accessory destined to be the one-off crowning glory of your dinner party. *Warehouse 9 - 9 24A St, Al Quoz, assemblyvintage.com*

Dubai Outlet Mall
Lace up your sneakers and hit the hundreds of stores in the homeware section for everything you need, including tableware, flatware, and serving items. Scout unmissable deals on interesting brands and buy in bulk for grand occasions. *Dubai-Al Ain Road RE66), 04 423 4666, dubaioutletmall.com*

Everbright Cookware
A factory showroom stocked to the rafters with high-quality cookware, as well as utensils and serving items, this is style central when it comes to mixing form and function with everything on sale both beautiful and usable. *Damascus Road, Al Qusais Industrial Area 1, Dubai, 800 383 7468, everbrightcookware.com*

Tanagra
For a well-deserved splurge, curated luxury cutlery, serveware, table linen and dining accessories from the likes of Christofle, Daum, Missoni Home, and more, set the scene as you search for elevated hero pieces for your next party. *Dubai Mall, Mall of the Emirates, tanagra.me*

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The essential spaces edit

Your home's busiest spaces deserve a thoughtful design lift. We take a look at what's trending for 2026 in kitchen and bathroom styling

Al Meera

CRAFTED SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability continues to evolve beyond a checklist of eco-friendly materials into something more nuanced and design driven. Next year, kitchens will embrace crafted sustainability - an approach that prioritises thoughtful material choices with longevity at its core. Rather than insisting every surface be overtly 'green', designers are pairing innovative recycled composites with timeless natural finishes to create layered, responsible spaces that still feel luxurious. Think composite cabinetry made from reclaimed materials sitting alongside bespoke wood details, or the contrast of honed granite teamed with unfinished timber. The beauty lies in the juxtaposition between refined and raw. This mix-and-match philosophy allows homeowners to introduce sustainability through selective, high-impact elements - proving that eco-conscious design can be both enduring and elegant.

Covet House

CURVES ARE IN

Angular geometry is giving way to a softer sculptural style, with curves shaping a new wave of kitchen design. Kitchen islands, traditionally defined by straight lines, are being reimagined as rounded, crescent or gently tapered silhouettes that feel more social and fluid. These new shapes not only elevate the aesthetic but also create organic gathering points that make the kitchen a more inviting communal zone. The absence of sharp corners also supports a safer workplace – crucial for a family home – and invites smoother interaction between cooking, dining and chillout areas. Cabinetry is also embracing this softened language. Rounded corner units, curved door fronts and flowing joinery bring a sense of calm to the space to create a cohesive, harmonious cooking environment.

QUIET EFFICIENCY

The smartest kitchens of 2026 won't announce their technology, instead choosing to keep it out of sight. Functionality is becoming beautifully discreet, driven by a wave of subtle innovations that prioritise ease and efficiency over in-your-face display. AI-enabled appliances that learn cooking routines, app-controlled lighting that adapts throughout the day, and systems that optimise energy usage all operate quietly in the background. While multifunction taps such as Quooker have long offered convenience with boiling, filtered and sparkling water on demand, the new generation of kitchen tech goes much further. Voice-responsive ovens and fridges streamline tasks, while refrigerators capable of monitoring and managing inventory are becoming standard. The result is a visually tranquil kitchen that performs at an impressively advanced (unseen) level.

COLOUR CONFIDENCE

Colour is stepping confidently back into the kitchen, with the year ahead favouring warmth, richness and bold expression. Earth-based neutrals - taupe, mushroom, beige – offer an inviting, grounded backdrop that complements natural materials and subtle textures. These tones are being balanced with deeper, nature-inspired shades like forest green, terracotta and smoky mineral hues for a palette that is both modern and enduring. Designers are also exploring bolder moves: saturated burgundy, deep navy, sunlit yellow and even soft pastels introduced as accent tones or statement presentations. Two-tone cabinetry is especially prominent, with perimeter units in one shade and the island or upper cabinets in another to add dimension and character. The overall effect is a kitchen that feels both trend-forward and deeply personal.

Divine Savages

Divine Savages

Studio VDGA

STATEMENT TILES

Where 2025 saw large-format slabs, dramatic veined onyx and textured finishes dominate, 2026 heralds a return to pattern, artistry and handmade designs. Renewed interest in eclectic tile choices - from hand-painted motifs to Moroccan-inspired geometry and nature-inspired finishes – will introduce warmth and offer understated drama, bringing an expressive quality to the bathroom that counters any clinical aesthetic. Hand-painted tiles are now being used playfully across shower walls and backsplashes, scattered in curated clusters for a bespoke, artisanal feel. Together with layered patterns and tactile surfaces, the result is a move away from one-note minimalism toward spaces with presence, provenance and personality.

VINTAGE ILLUMINATION

Bathroom lighting is taking a nostalgic turn as vintage fixtures become unexpected scene-stealers. Traditionally avoided due to safety concerns, heritage lighting is now being integrated with confidence thanks to modern upgrades and smart placement. Designers are favouring pieces with character such as Art Deco sconces and mid-century wall lights, through to glittering candelabra chandeliers, and fixtures with ribbed or seeded glass that cast atmospheric shadows. Check out the attic for old family treasures or head to any of Dubai's vintage emporia for unique alternatives to standard off-the-shelf fittings. The trick is careful balancing within contemporary settings: antique brass sconces paired with ultra-modern taps, for example.

COLOUR DRENCHING

Bold colour continues its ascent with colour drenching absolutely en vogue. An all-encompassing, immersive approach where a single hue covers walls, ceiling and trim, this is in direct contrast to the crisp whites and backdrop canvas neutrals that traditionally enter bathroom territory. Instead, with immersive colour you are enveloped in an ambience that feels intentional and cocooning. By eliminating visual breaks, colour drenching enhances spatial context and can even make the tiniest bathroom appear larger. Colour-wise, warm terracotta, olive green and mushroom-based neutrals deliver a grounded, natural calm; dusky rose and muted blue bring softness and depth; while saturated jewel tones offer unapologetic drama. Whether subtle or striking, the monochromatic effect creates a mood-rich environment where colour becomes the defining motif.

The Curious Department

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SCULPTURAL DESIGN

In 2026, bathroom fixtures are evolving into sculptural centrepieces - functional objects reimagined as art. Floating vanities, deep curved basins, asymmetrical bathtubs, and solid stone pieces define bathrooms that feel both modern and calming. Smooth, flowing shapes are key with rounded edges, wave-like ledges, and gentle curves create a relaxing rhythm. Stone is taking on a more sculptural role, carved so the natural veining flows across the shapes. Vanities are treated as solid blocks, while taps and showerheads follow the same curved, elegant lines. Stacked cylinders and geometric forms act like small artworks, turning bathrooms into carefully designed spaces where every piece forms part of a cohesive and beautifully executed narrative.

THE DESIGN LENS

Designer Sawsan Haber, the creative force behind Dipiugi (*@dipiugi*) and ambassador for Art of Living (*@artoflivingmall*), offers an insider's view on the luxury design trends and sensibilities set to define the year ahead

Sawsan Haber

As the global design community looks ahead to 2026, Sawsan sees residential interiors becoming increasingly shaped by the human experience and emotional mindset. "There is a conscious decision to reconnect with where we choose to live as a place of sanctuary and comfort," she says. "Our world is increasingly digital and AI driven, and the desire to be more grounded and reduce over-exposure to technology – when not absolutely necessary – is incredibly powerful."

This idea of the home as an 'authentic sanctuary' sits at the heart of her vision. According to Sawsan, this will manifest through warmer, nature-inspired palettes and tactile comfort. "It will be in our colour choices, which will continue to be more inviting – think desert tones, terracotta, cinnamon. We have already seen this evolving, with mocha a trending warm colour since 2024. Add to that touches of greens and blues, and we will see a palette with a strong link to the colours we see in nature."

Layering will also remain key, with rich textiles, natural wood grains and beautifully veined marble enhancing depth and warmth. "We will see increased use of limestone and marble, as well as the return of warmer woods," she adds. "Metal also has its place,

Kaas

Elve

but less use of gold and a switch to champagne or muted finishes."

Sustainability - shaped as much by the client as the designer - is another force influencing interiors. "Sustainability in the interiors space is closely aligned with the concept of creating timeless designs," says Sawsan. "I want to create homes that stand the test of time, that the client loves today and in five years. The first step on the sustainability path has to be to create timeless designs that are less trend influenced."

She highlights cultural and emotional connection as part of this longevity. "This extends to utilising heirloom pieces or sourcing items that have a strong emotional memory connection to our parents' house, for example, and this can be something as simple as a picture frame or décor piece."

Alongside this, clients increasingly expect toxin-free materials, ethically sourced woods and eco-friendly finishes. "The sustainable label is a high-quality design project expectation," she reaffirms.

In the UAE in particular, Sawsan highlights the perennial appeal of luxury as the defining thread. "There is such a melting pot of cultures and taste, with luxury as the anchor. Throughout 2025 we have seen luxury design boom thanks to the influx of high net-worth individuals relocating from overseas." Yet even within high luxury, comfort remains essential. "Homeowners want the house to be impressive but to embrace them as well."

Sawsan balances the luxury-comfort equation through refined visual statements. Wall cladding, sculptural wallpaper and standout pieces in marble or onyx introduce quiet opulence without excess. She also sees a shift in how clients use their space: "There is definitely a trend towards homes that have boutique hotel aspects, from wellness rooms for yoga or meditation practice, to spa suites – and this ties in with the idea of sensory-driven comfort," she notes.

Personal passions are shaping layouts too, from car galleries to music rooms - all contributing to deeper emotional attachment.

Looking toward 2026, she is energised by the city's collaborative spirit. "There is room for every designer in Dubai as the real estate market is so dynamic, and with a cross-cultural mix of nationalities and design tastes, we are colleagues rather than competitors. The community is thriving and inclusive, and spaces like the Designers' Hub at Art of Living Mall offer a fantastic opportunity to encourage collaboration and exploration."

Dimora

Dimora

The art of tablescaping

Turn your table into a memorable centrepiece of celebration with thoughtful styling, layered details and seasonal touches to elevate every occasion

Tablescaping has become the style highlight of any gathering and is seen all over our Instagram feeds. It's an opportunity to dress your table with the same care as an outfit: coordinated, expressive, and full of personality.

From simple touches pulled from your own props to elaborate themed arrangements, set the mood before your guests even sit down, with the fun in the creativity. Here's how to bring the art of tablescaping to life at home.

CHOOSE COLOURS

Start with two main colours for balance and cohesion. Add accent shades in smaller doses through flowers, napkins, and glassware. Repeat each colour three times in different heights or objects to create visual rhythm. Include natural textures like rattan, jute, or foliage to add warmth and depth. Colour coordination doesn't have to follow the season strictly - let key floral elements or standout accessories dictate the palette. Stick to a simple framework to avoid a cluttered or chaotic look.

LAYER ESSENTIALS

Layering is essential for structure and transforms a basic setup into a cohesive and visually interesting tablescape. Begin with a base such as a tablecloth, runner, or placemats, then stack plates largest to smallest, placing the most decorative item on top. Position cutlery and glasses in logical order. Add napkins on top of plates or folded beside them. Incorporate flowers, small plants, or seasonal décor to add depth. Each layer should create focus and contrast without overcrowding the table.

MIX AND MATCH

Combine textures, materials, and patterns to add dimension. Use

contrasting items – linen napkins with ceramic plates, rattan underplates with glassware – but maintain a linking element like colour or style. Vary sizes and heights to prevent monotony. Mixing finishes (matte, glossy, metallic) and patterns creates visual interest. Keep proportions consistent and scale balanced to avoid clutter. Thoughtful contrasts make the table feel curated, dynamic, and intentional without overwhelming the space.

STYLE YOUR CENTREPIECE

The centrepiece is the table's focal point. Use tall pieces in the middle, lower items at the sides. Keep height manageable so diners can see one another. Cluster vases, candles, or small decorative objects to create visual interest. Triangle or wave arrangements work best for balance and flow. Introduce texture to bring life to the presentation, and think outside the box when selecting materials. Avoid overcrowding; the centrepiece should enhance the table and complement the overall layout rather than dominate it.

THINK SEASONAL

Use seasonal elements to anchor your tablescape. Spring: light tones and fresh flowers. Autumn: earthy foliage and warm textures. Winter: layered textures, candles, and subtle sparkle. Swap glassware or small accessories to match the season. Tailor items to specific occasions like holidays, birthdays, or cultural celebrations. Seasonal styling gives context and ensures the table feels relevant and purposeful without requiring a complete redesign each time.

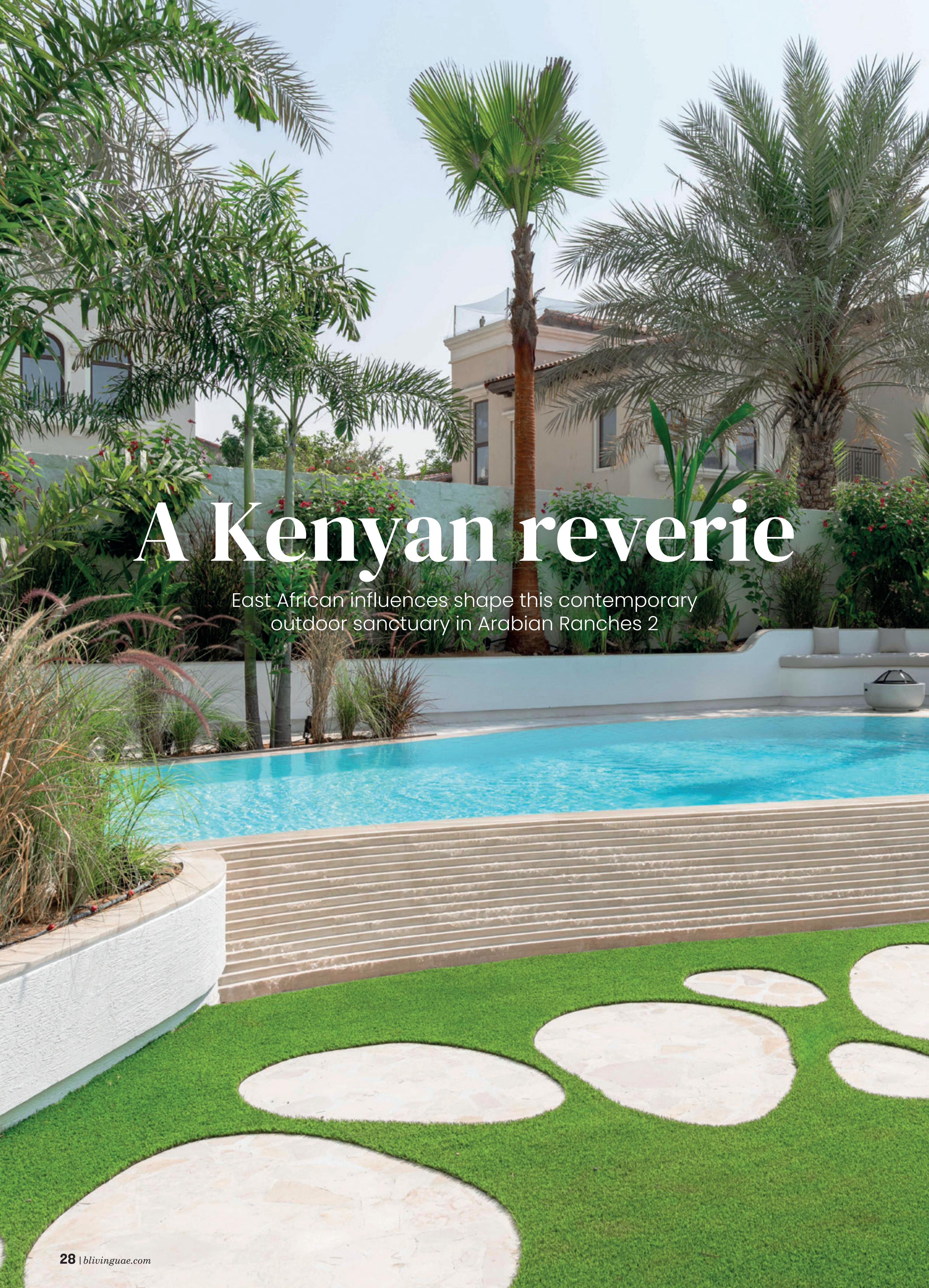
ADD LITTLE EXTRAS

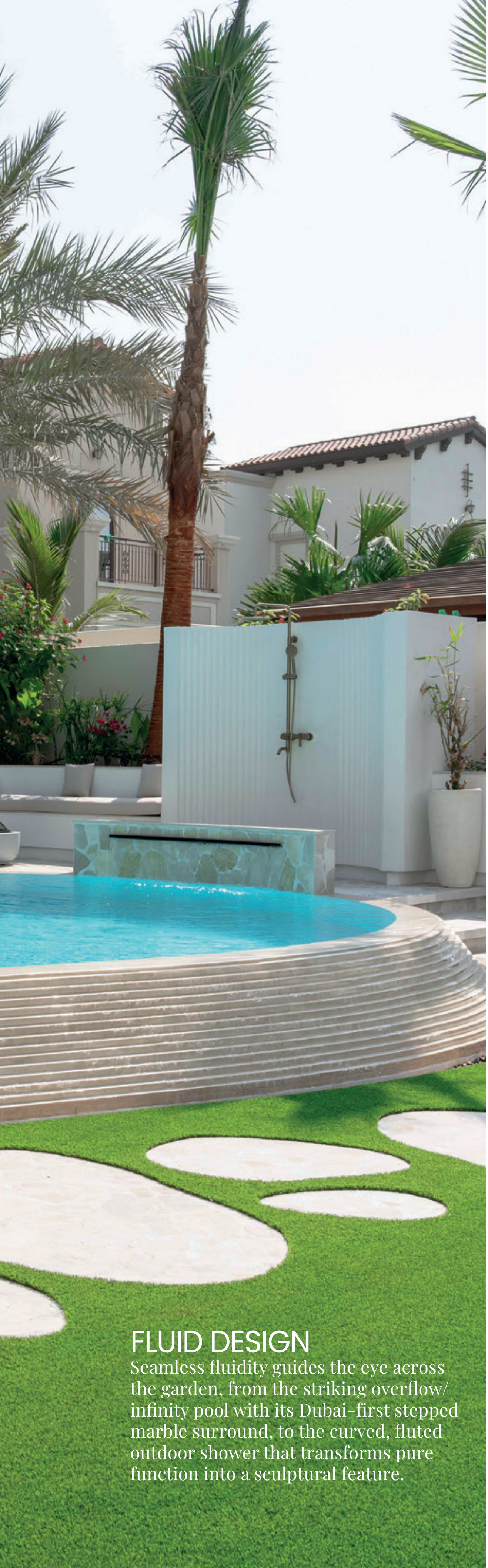
Small details personalise the table. Name cards, small gifts, or themed items signal attention to guests. Add ambient lighting to set mood. Use embroidered napkins, or keepsakes for added impact. Ensure accessories match the colour palette or theme for cohesion. Extras should enhance function or experience, not overcrowd the table. Practical, thoughtful additions create a memorable impression while keeping the setup clean and organised.

Image credits: Christofle, Good Earth, Chahar, Bagh, Micucci Interiors

A Kenyan reverie

East African influences shape this contemporary outdoor sanctuary in Arabian Ranches 2





FLUID DESIGN
Seamless fluidity guides the eye across the garden, from the striking overflow/infinity pool with its Dubai-first stepped marble surround, to the curved, fluted outdoor shower that transforms pure function into a sculptural feature.

> “A truly great garden has a story and must feel like a natural, living space you never want to leave”

HOME NOTES

WHO LIVES HERE?

Shikha and Karan Kapoor, son Krish, and Fluffy the dog

THE PROPERTY

A four-bedroom Arabian Ranches 2 villa

Relocating from the verdant heartland of East Africa, the Kapoors had a clear brief: a garden that felt like home and the lush, layered greenery of Kenya's forested landscapes. "At the same time, the idea of playing with subtle shifts in elevation and an overflow/infinity pool as the central focus, was integral in delivering movement and vitality," explains Nabil Sherif of NGS Architects (*@ngsarchitects*).

Shikha elaborates: "We wanted the garden to whisper the story of our journey from Nairobi to Dubai. A great garden is an extension of the home's soul - a private sanctuary that awakens the senses and creates a sense of tranquility."

With this philosophy as the foundation, the design embraces layered levels to subtly define social pockets while maintaining a seamless flow. Child-friendly considerations were a non-negotiable, as was the desire for a nature-first design, as seen in the generous greenery, calming water elements, and inviting areas to sit and unwind.

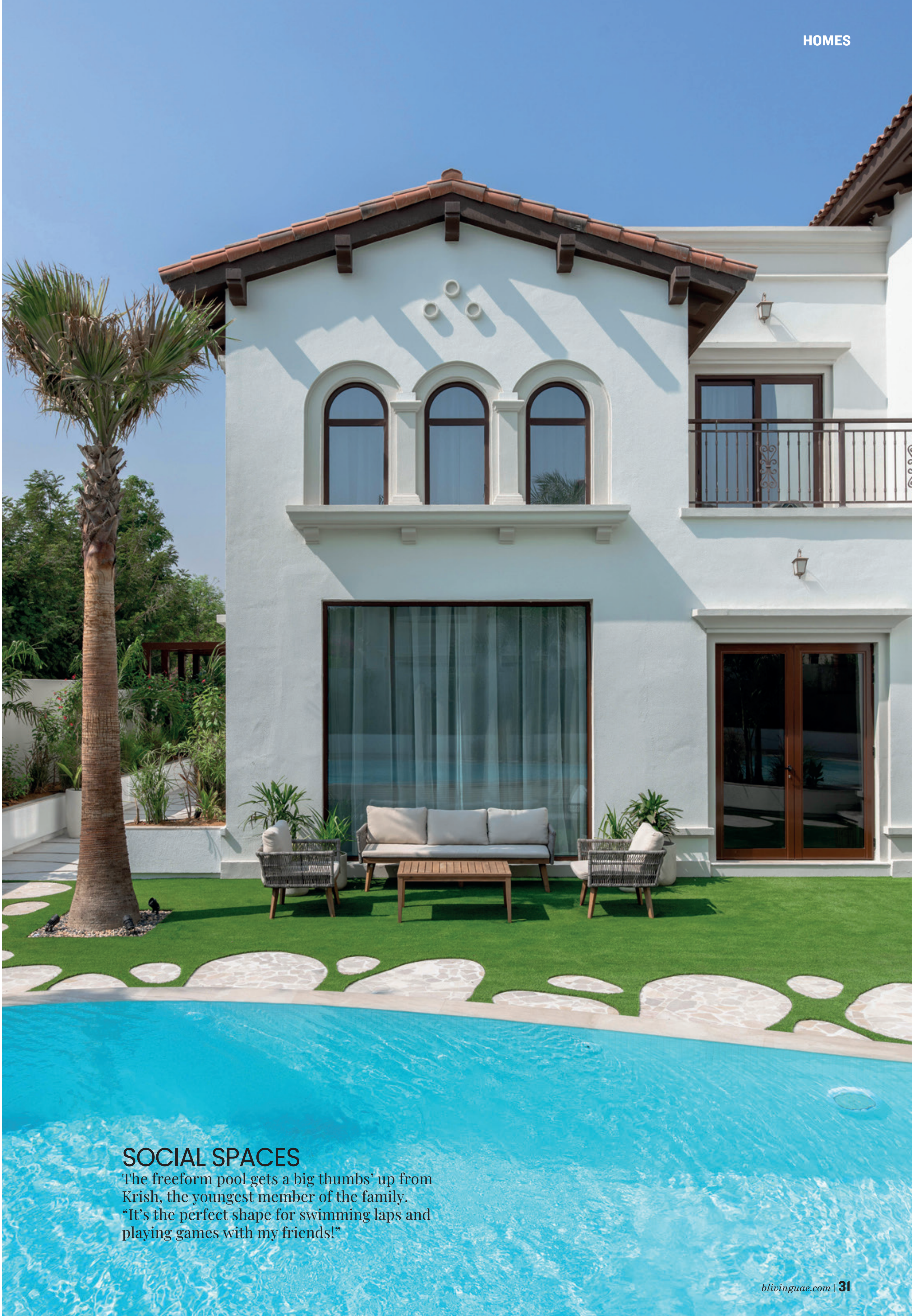
In another NGS first, the side path paving features hand-poured resin that creates a swirl of visual intrigue.

"The design was also explored with an investor's foresight, as a space created not only to nurture the family's lifestyle but also to elevate the property's future value," notes Nabil.

Conceived as a personal retreat rather than a grand entertaining space, the stepped elevations guide visitors gently through the landscape, revealing moments of interest along the way. Completed in just eight months, the result is a Kenyan-inspired sanctuary that offers the perfect escape.

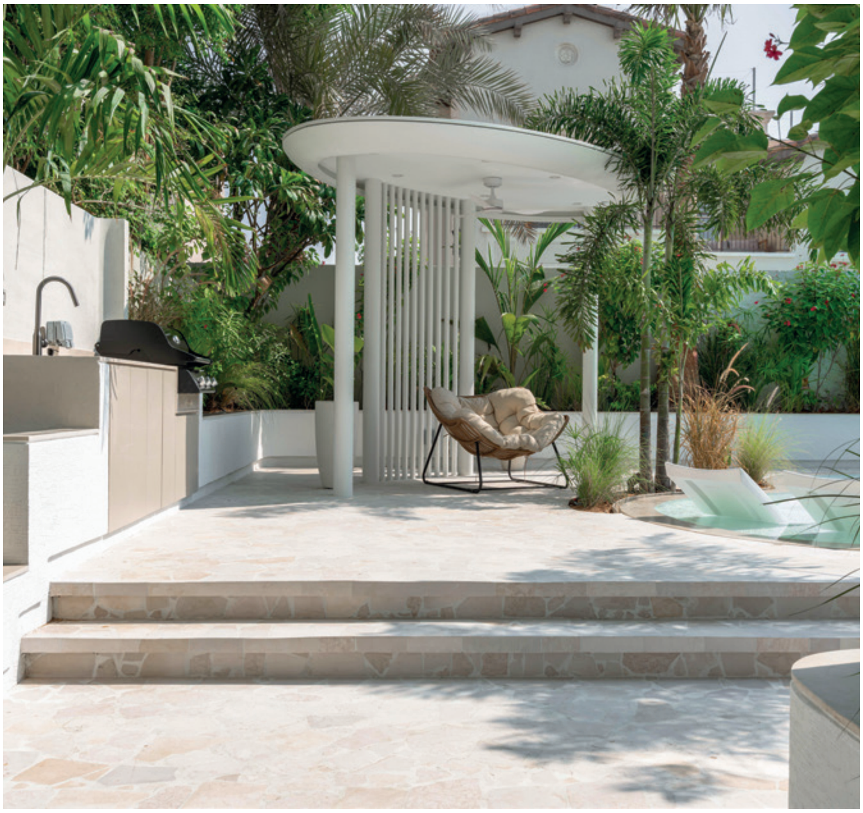
Shikha's favourite spot captures this spirit perfectly: "I love the seating nook by the waterfall. The moment I sit, the gentle roar of cascading water washes away the day's stress. It's where I read, reflect, and feel most connected to the peace of nature I so enjoy."

> “We wanted the garden to whisper the story of our journey from Nairobi to Dubai”



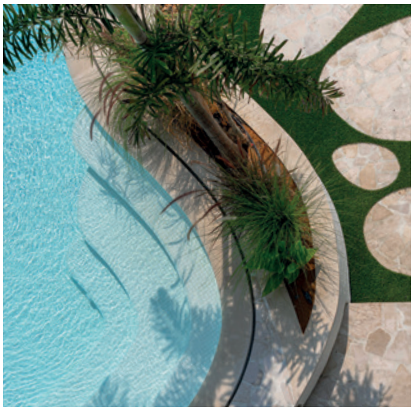
SOCIAL SPACES

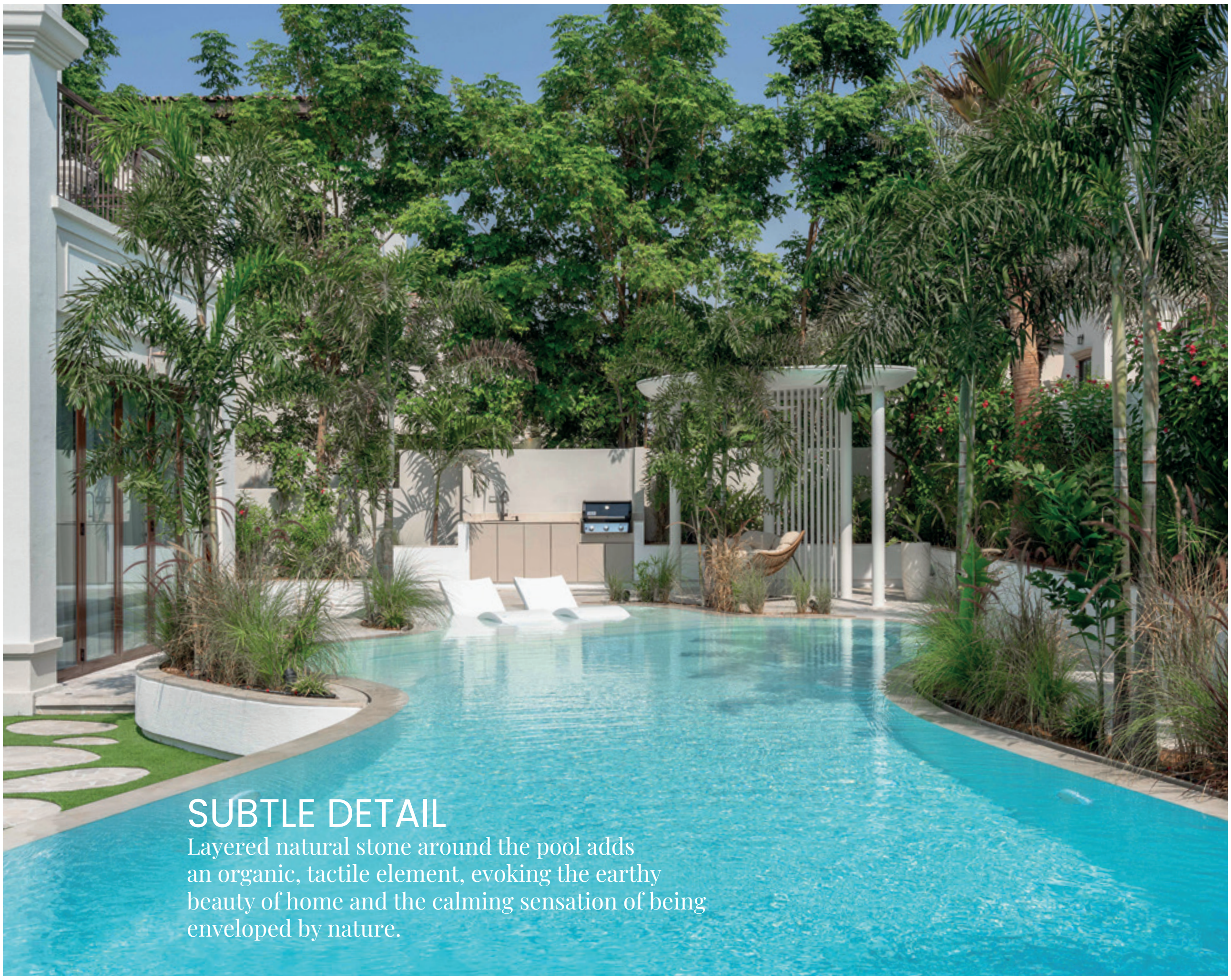
The freeform pool gets a big thumbs' up from Krish, the youngest member of the family. "It's the perfect shape for swimming laps and playing games with my friends!"



AL FRESCO LIVING

At the far side of the pool a modern reinterpretation of a classic pergola makes a confident design statement, and offers a welcome breath of air courtesy of a retro-influenced ceiling fan. "We never repeat a design, and the oval roof and gently curving, column-inspired structure frame the space as a quiet spot to unwind amid the greenery," says Nabil. A sleek outdoor kitchen completes the scene.



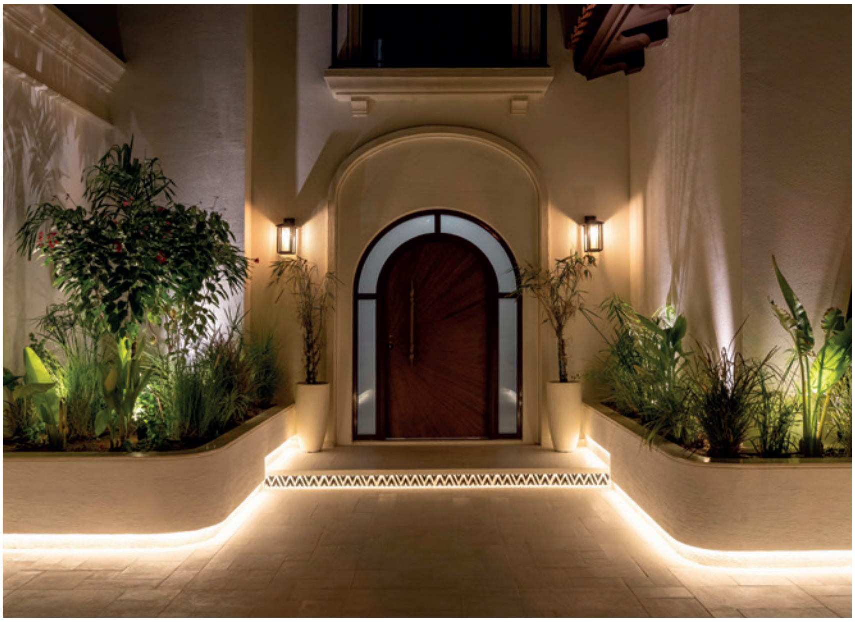


SUBTLE DETAIL

Layered natural stone around the pool adds an organic, tactile element, evoking the earthy beauty of home and the calming sensation of being enveloped by nature.

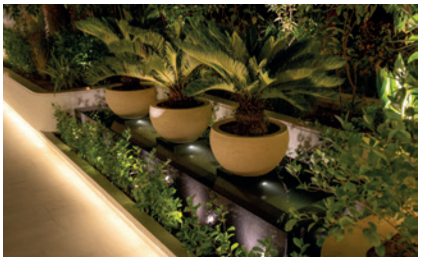
LANDSCAPING

"Designed as a low maintenance space, the garden will naturally mature and evolve," says Nabil. Inspired by Kenya's vibrant landscapes, he layered tropical foliage and flowering bushes - including Washingtonias and foxtail palms - to create density, shade, and imbue natural abundance. The gentle cascade of the pool and vertical wall fountain introduce a soothing soundscape reminiscent of East Africa. "Throughout, soft curves and abstract paving shapes break up the geometry, conveying a fluid, inherently natural rhythm that ensures the garden feels welcoming, calm, and beautifully alive," he adds.



ENTRANCE

The home's entrance subtly echoes Kenya, with black and white striped custom-cut tiles on the risers offering a refined, minimal nod to the Kapoors' origins. A cascading water feature in black absolute marble, topped with sculpted stone bowls and miniature palms, welcomes visitors and sets a calming, sensory starting point for their journey through the space.

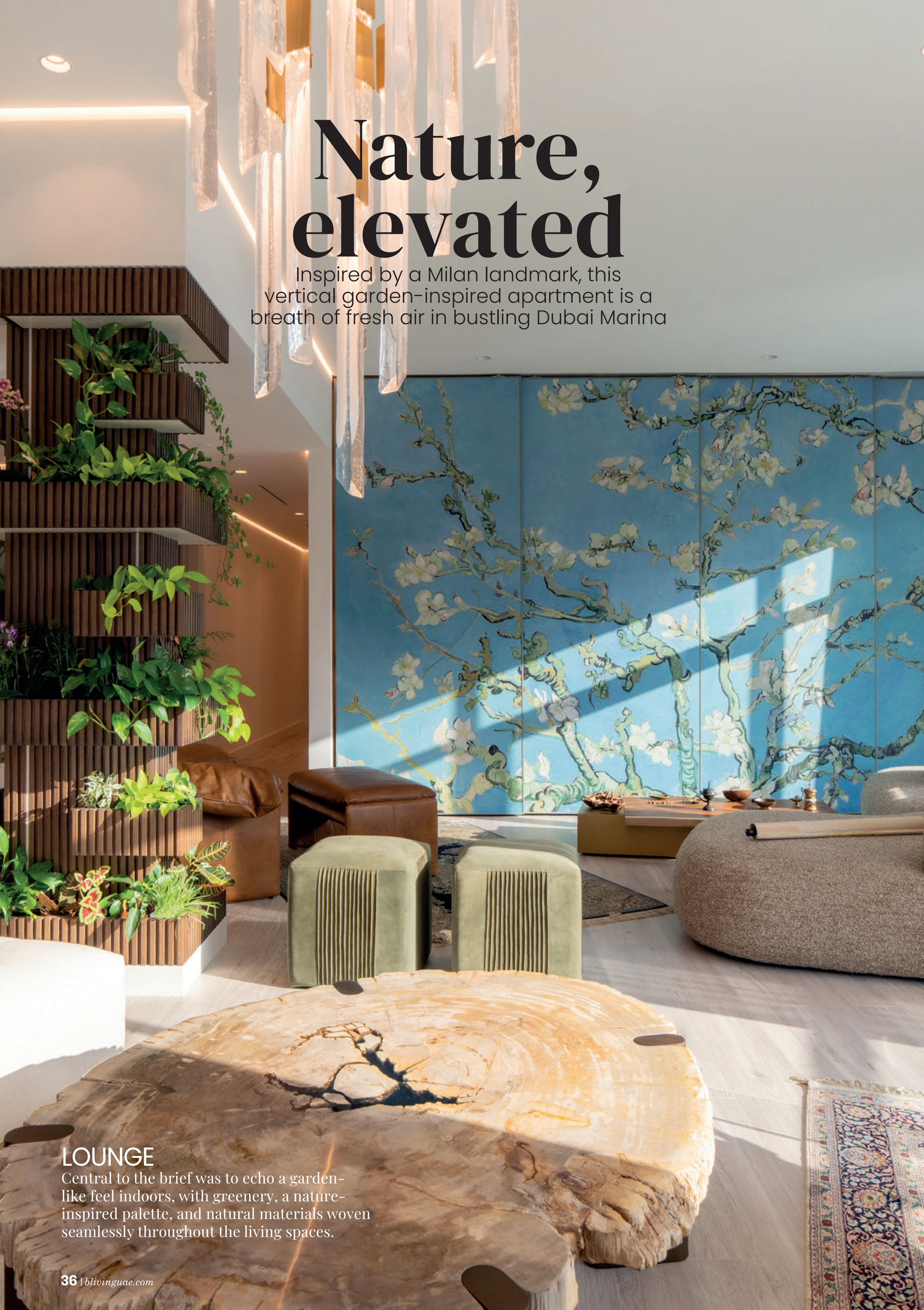


BY NIGHT

The pool's generous scale was a bold decision, yet rather than overwhelming the layout, it quietly anchors the garden, allowing each surrounding element - from the modern pergola with its shaded solo seating, to the curved stone bench and fire pit - to contribute its own character. By night, the space transforms entirely, illuminated through a meticulously curated lighting scheme, which is an NGS signature. The triple hand-sanded travertine freeform paving takes on a new luminosity while strip lighting along the pool's underskirt and within the wall planters adds warmth and depth, enhancing the sense of immersion. The result is a seamless composition, rich in ambience and meaning, where lush greenery and the azure pool waters become the evening's striking focal points.

Nature, elevated

Inspired by a Milan landmark, this vertical garden-inspired apartment is a breath of fresh air in bustling Dubai Marina



LOUNGE

Central to the brief was to echo a garden-like feel indoors, with greenery, a nature-inspired palette, and natural materials woven seamlessly throughout the living spaces.

> We wanted to deliver a home with soul – where style and personality effortlessly intertwine to nurture a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere

HOME NOTES

WHO LIVES HERE?

An empty nester couple

THE PROPERTY

A three-bedroom Trident Bayside apartment in Dubai Marina

The homeowners, originally from Italy, recently transitioned from villa living to a high-floor apartment lifestyle. As new empty nesters, the shift offered an opportunity to reclaim the ease and freedom of their pre-children years while embracing a more design-forward way of living.

Originally a three-bedroom unit, for Cinzia and Marco Tedeschi of Smart Renovation (*@smartrenovationdubai*) it made sense to reconfigure the space by removing the bedroom adjacent to the living room, which significantly expanded the couple's shared social zone.

Cinzia explains: "We played smart by keeping the bathroom intact, so when it comes time to sell, it can easily revert to a three-bedroom home." The bathroom is now discreetly concealed behind a sliding panel clad in a dramatic Van Gogh print wallpaper from Wall Art. "It's such a strong visual; almost like an exquisite screen that doubles as an artwork," she adds.

The design narrative takes its cues from Milan's iconic Bosco Verticale, inspiring the apartment's new persona: Giardino Verticale. Florals and greenery appear throughout, from botanical wallpaper to a central pillar enveloped in tiered planters crafted in a fluted brown-wood finish, housing layers of real plants. Materials echo the verdant concept: textural stone, warm tones, and statement lighting such as the Miss Lighting chandelier in the main living space, with its crystal-like form reminiscent of millennia-old stalactites.

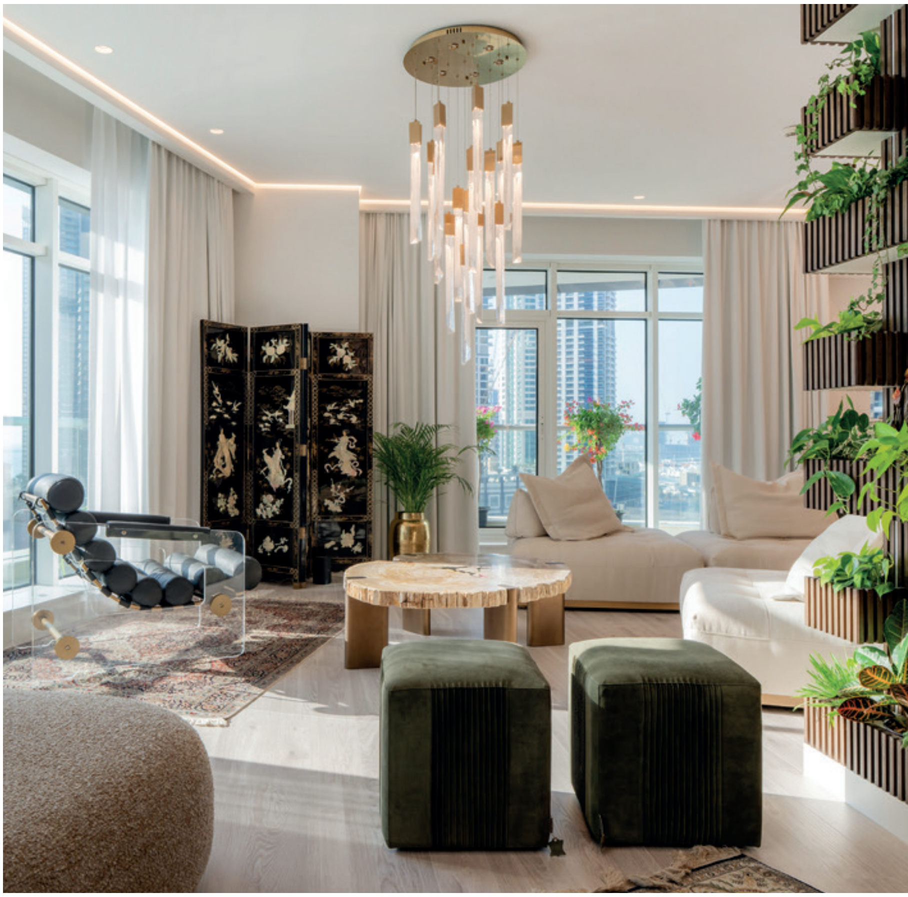
Even the compact powder room extends the nature-inspired theme, anchored by a striking blue-grey onyx slab and a bespoke vanity accented with a bronze-rose gold basin and taps.

Executed in just three-and-a-half months, the home made for two is rooted in light, texture, and intelligent spatial planning.

> "The client's impeccable taste and eye for style made our job a dream"

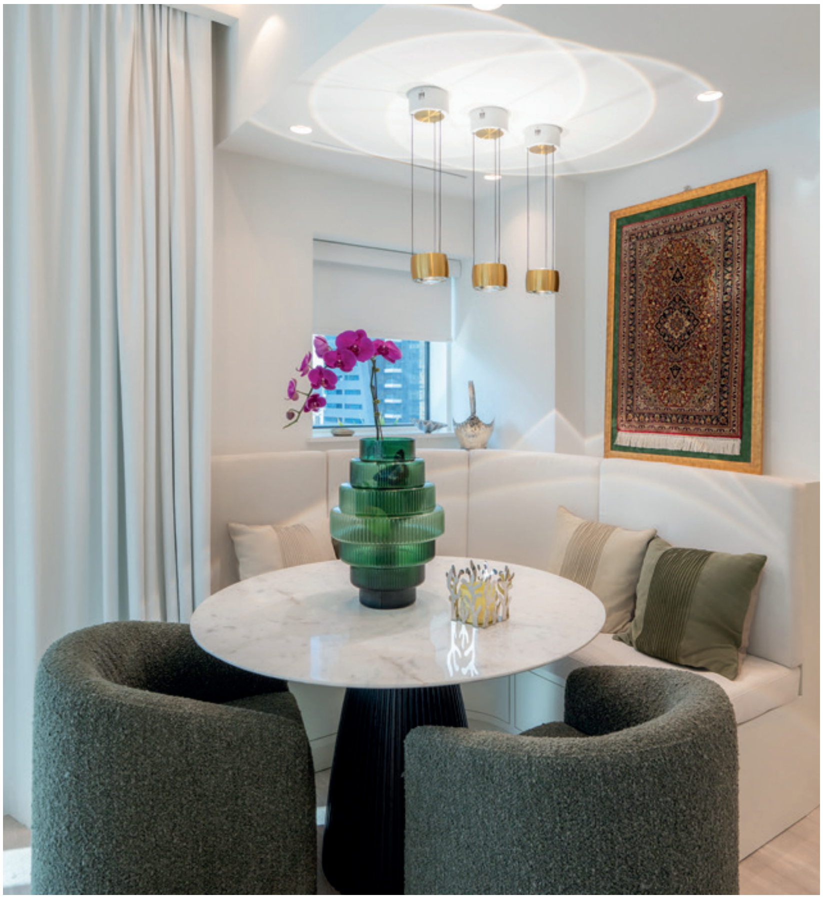
LIVING AREA

Flooded with natural light from full-height, dual aspect windows, the living area is defined by its bright, uplifting persona. Many of the key furniture pieces were carried over from the client's previous home, creating an eclectic, character-rich ambience. An inlaid lacquer-style screen, plush green velvet stools, antique rugs and a striking transverse tree-trunk coffee table anchor the room, giving depth and personality. The choice of simple polished neutral floor tiles lets the styling shine while an abundance of flourishing greenery softens the space. Carefully considered internal lighting solutions complement the natural daylight, ensuring the room feels open and inviting at any time of day. Peeking outside, the balcony perspective is enlivened with floral hanging baskets brimming over with colour.



Light was maximised through three treatments, creating a soft, indirect glow in what had once been a dark entryway.

The sliding wall shifts to also reveal a bookshelf and media unit, transforming it into a statement feature with a hidden story.

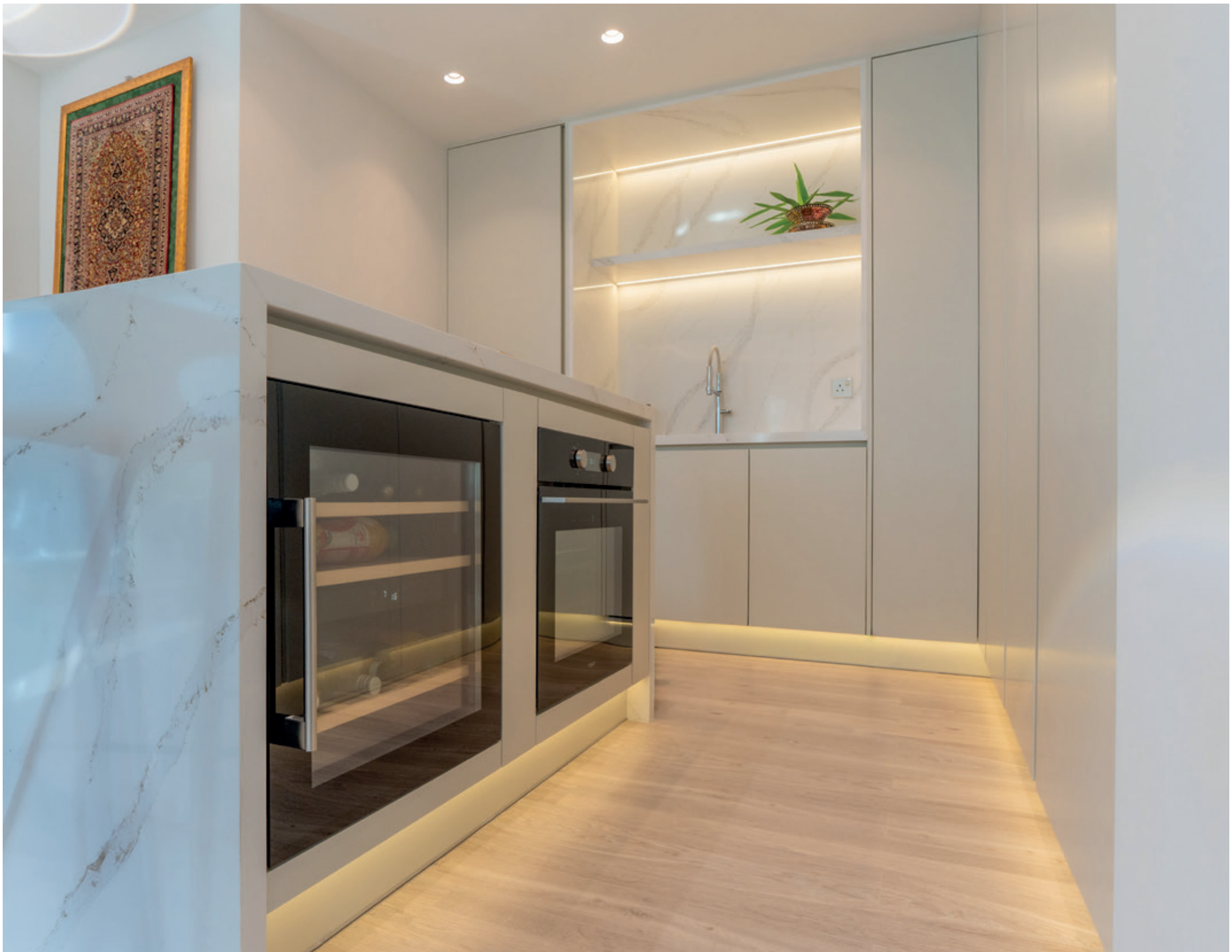


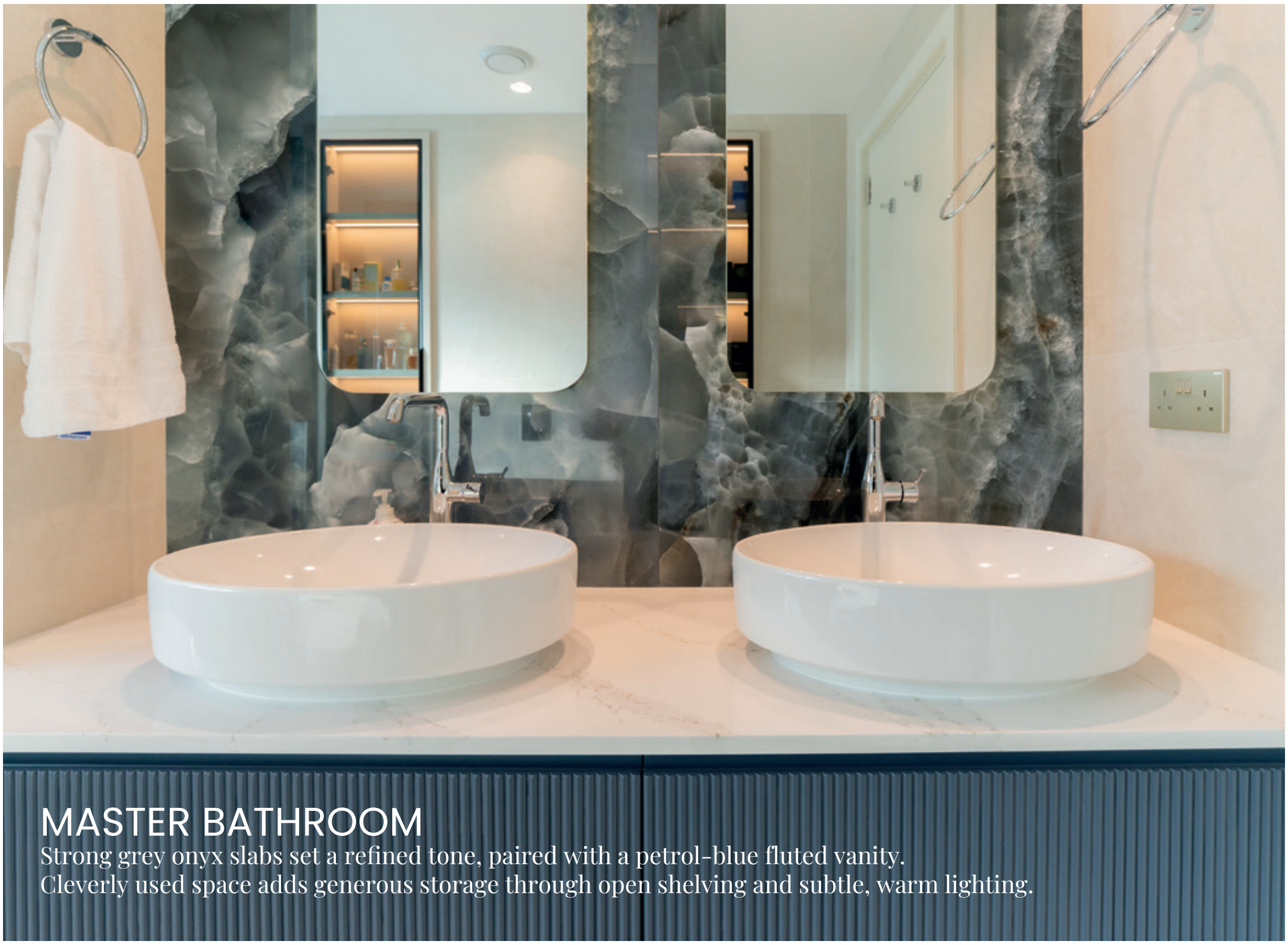
DINING AREA

A once-unused corner beside the kitchen has been transformed into a dining nook with real presence. Designed around the client's original table, the space now features a custom crescent-shaped bench that gives both comfort and sculptural interest. A refined palette of creams and greens keeps the corner feeling elegant yet inviting, while brushed-gold pendant spotlights add intimacy and a touch of polish. Even the small corner window, once an afterthought, now plays its part - drawing in natural light that enhances the nook's warm, considered atmosphere.

KITCHEN

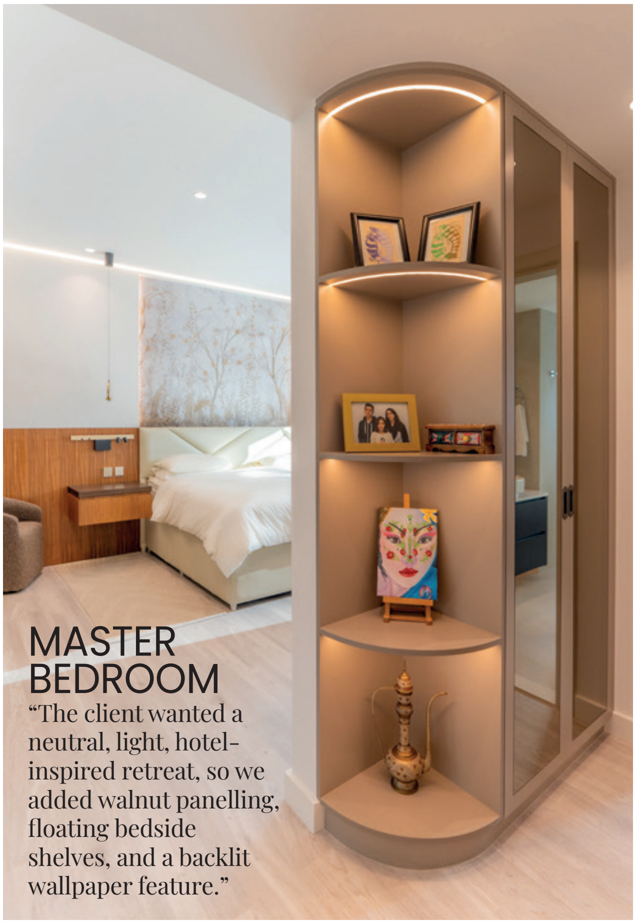
An open kitchen sits beside the dining area, intentionally kept simple with clean lines, a pared-back aesthetic, and smart functionality. Abundant, well-planned storage ensures the space stays streamlined, organised, and visually unobtrusive.





MASTER BATHROOM

Strong grey onyx slabs set a refined tone, paired with a petrol-blue fluted vanity. Cleverly used space adds generous storage through open shelving and subtle, warm lighting.



MASTER BEDROOM

“The client wanted a neutral, light, hotel-inspired retreat, so we added walnut panelling, floating bedside shelves, and a backlit wallpaper feature.”

Space to be social

An open-plan family home with heart in The Meadows

LIVING ROOM
A panoramic picture window draws the eye through the room, connecting the lush garden beyond. Soft pink bouclé chairs frame the view, forming a cosy nook for reading or a sundowner, while a sliding door opens to let in fresh air in the cooler winter months.

> “We created social spaces for every family occasion, from quiet time after the kids go to bed, to weekend pool time”

HOME NOTES

WHO LIVES HERE?

Designed for a family to make their own

THE PROPERTY

A five-bedroom villa in The Meadows

A warm, welcoming family home with a distinctly European sensibility was the vision of property owners Lodewijk van der Lelij and Florien Stuyling de Lange. “When we bought the villa, we looked at how to optimise the space for family life, creating an open-plan layout that encouraged effortless social interaction,” explains Lodewijk.

A collaborative project, this was the couple’s third renovation with Ria Karapataki and Grigoris Grigoriou of JCT Contracting (*@jct.contracting*). Says Florien: “The JCT team have an intuitive understanding and appreciation of our design vision, and, yet again, their professionalism and impeccable attention to detail delivered on-time, on quality - and we’re already working together on our fourth property!”

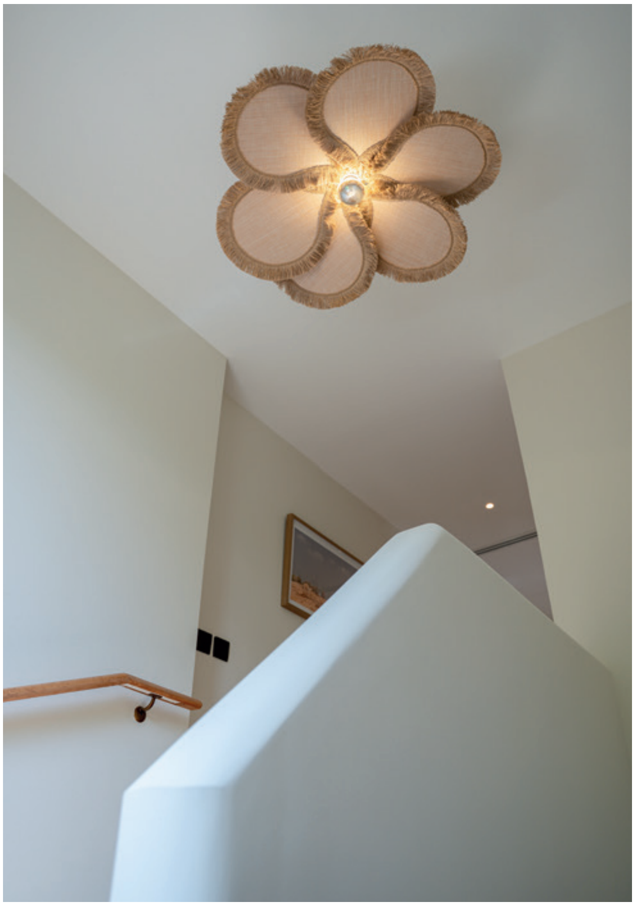
“We began by stripping back the existing ground floor, retaining only the supporting columns. An extension and new floor-to-ceiling picture windows now flood the space with natural light, transforming the living area,” says Ria.

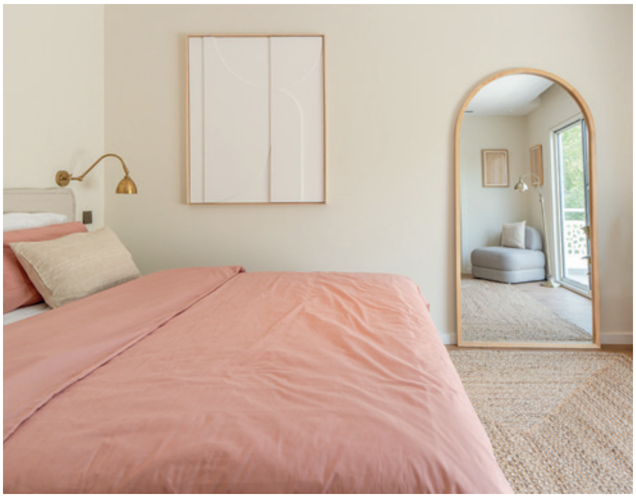
Sustainability principles also guided the brief, with Lodewijk and Florien keen to incorporate preloved furniture alongside thoughtfully chosen decorative accents.

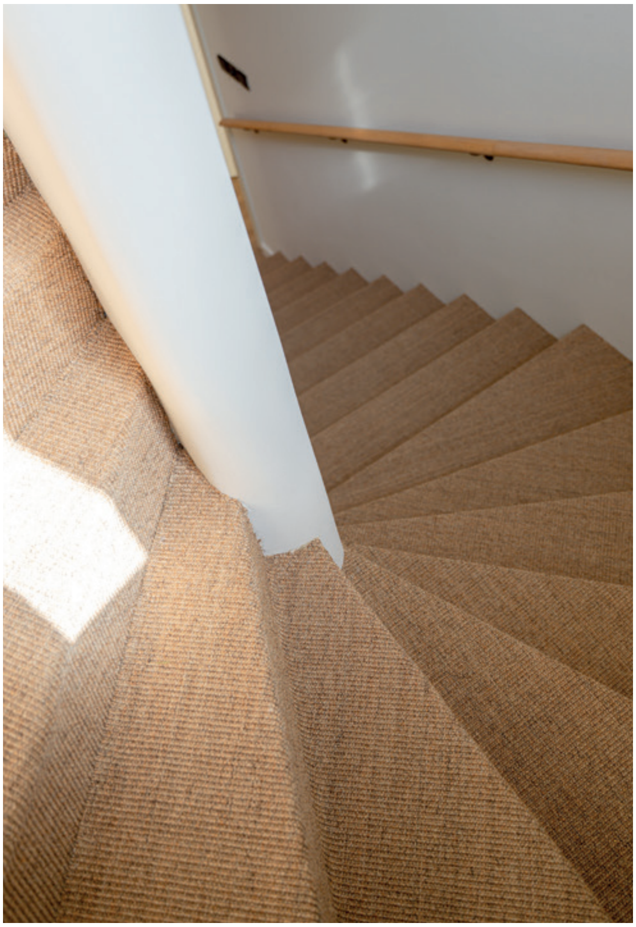
Wood-effect flooring was a smart choice as its non-slip properties make it a “no brainer” for when kids are running in from the pool area, “plus, the choice of the grout line ensures it looks seamless throughout the different spaces,” Ria remarks.

The result is a home that feels effortlessly stylish yet inherently comfortable, balancing contemporary elegance with lived-in warmth.

> “A cohesive flow of beautifully balanced spaces allows comfort and style to harmoniously coexist”





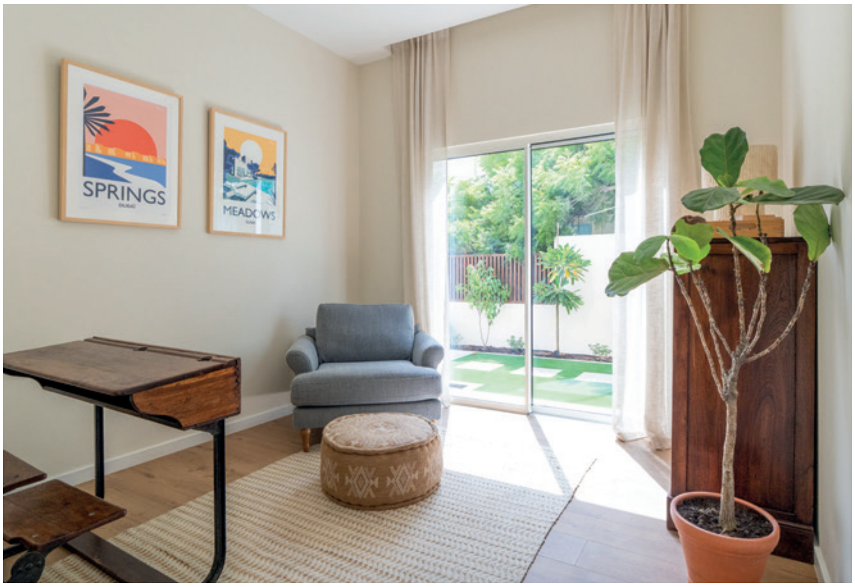


STAIRS

Often overlooked from a design perspective, the unusual choice of heavy-duty sisal as stair carpeting is both practical and sustainable. "Visually, it speaks to nature and adds an intriguing textural note," says Ria. The wooden handrail is original and was sanded back for a fresh finish while a petal-shaped pendant in complementary tones and textures ties the simple yet impactful design theme together.

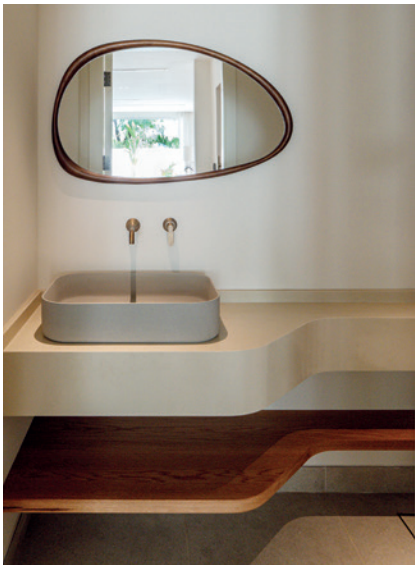
BEDROOMS

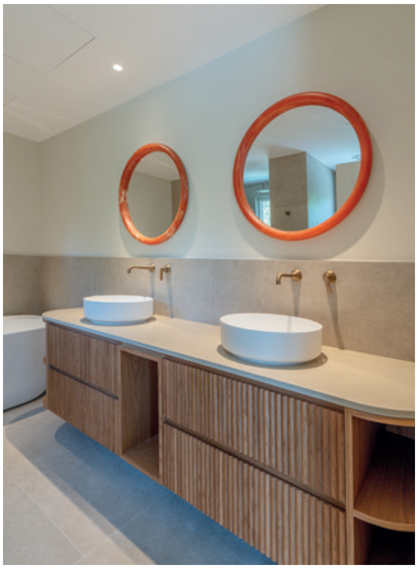
Bedrooms are oases of calm and follow the same pared-back styling refrain, from the neutral colour palette with occasional blush or brushed gold tonal uplift, as seen in the linens and bedside lights, and extending to minimalistic artworks and contoured mirrors that reflect an abundance of natural light. Arches feature subtly throughout, contrasting with angular elements to soften the spaces. Beds meanwhile are strategically positioned to drink in the garden and exterior vistas.



STUDY/PLAYROOM

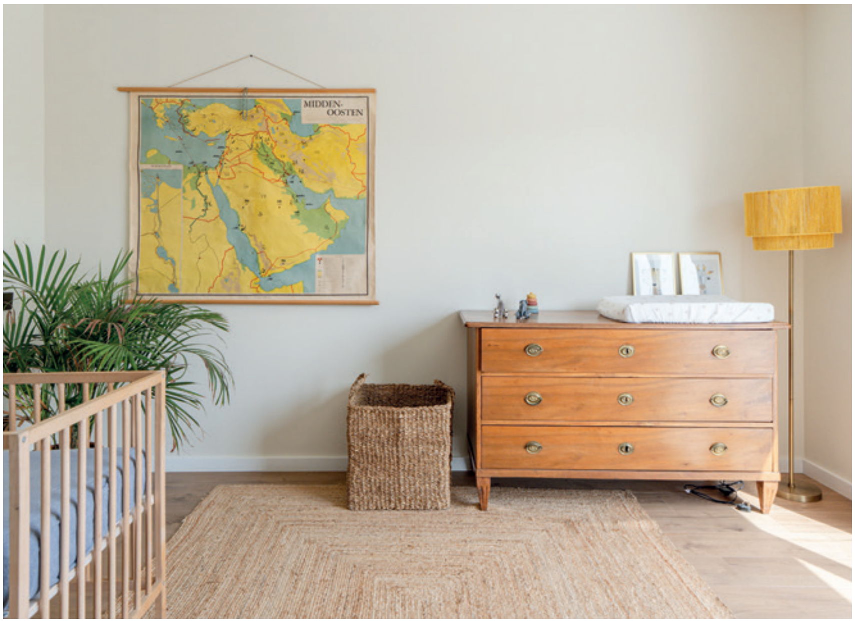
A tucked away gem of a room on the ground floor, the study-meets playroom-meets chill space vibe showcases its versatility and potential. Floor-to-ceiling windows open onto yet more green space, earning extra brownie points for accessibility, and the framed Dubai community posters add fun local flavour.





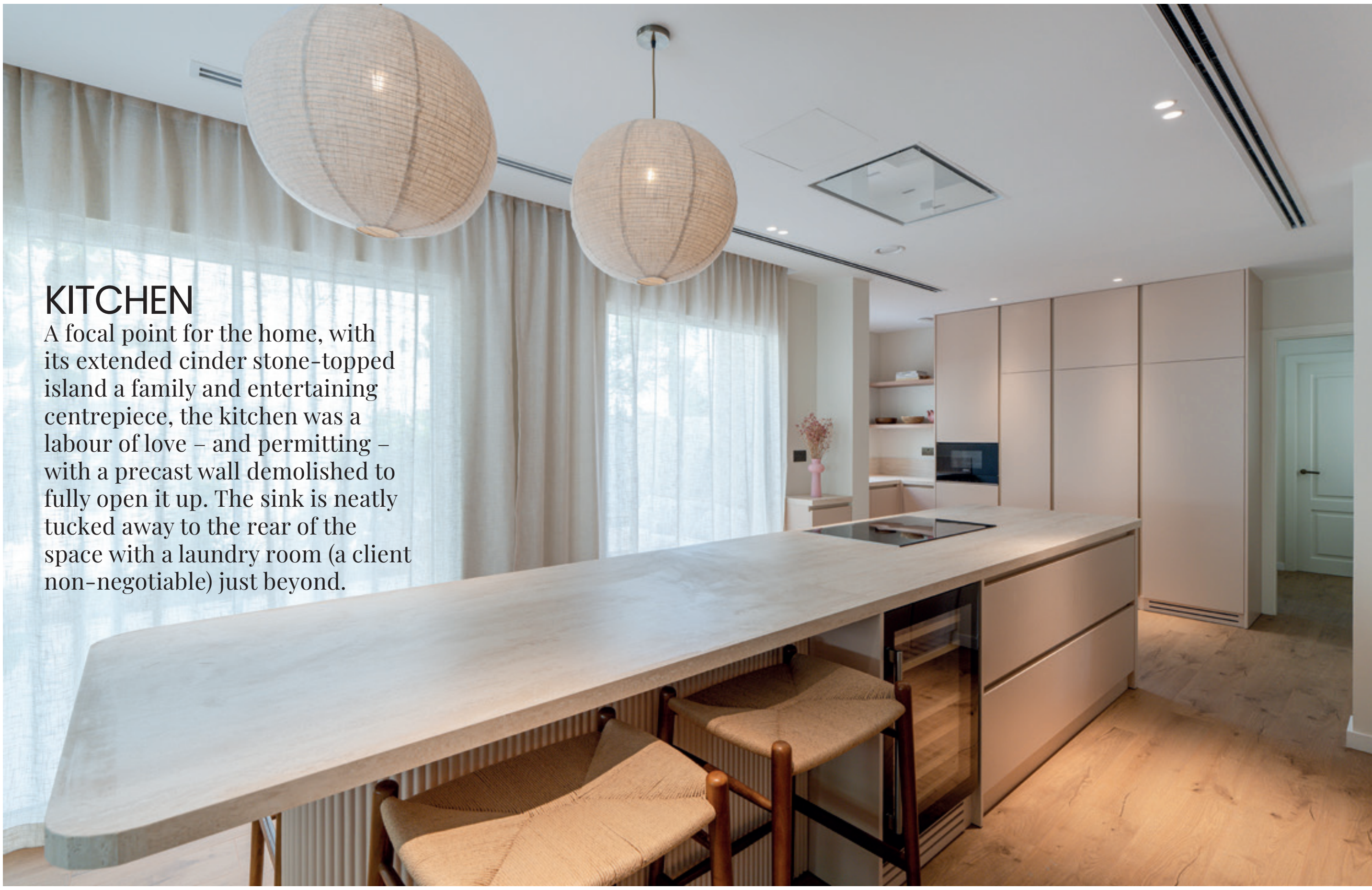
BATHROOMS

The downstairs powder room makes the most of its compact footprint, where the vanity's fluid lines contrast manmade quartz with rich brown wood in the shelving and abstract mirror, reinforcing nature's omnipresence throughout the home. Upstairs, the master bathroom may have ceded a few centimetres to the reconfigured bedroom and walk-in closet but now features a double-width shower, elegant freestanding tub, and double vanity with fluted wood detailing and a pop of orange in the mirrors.



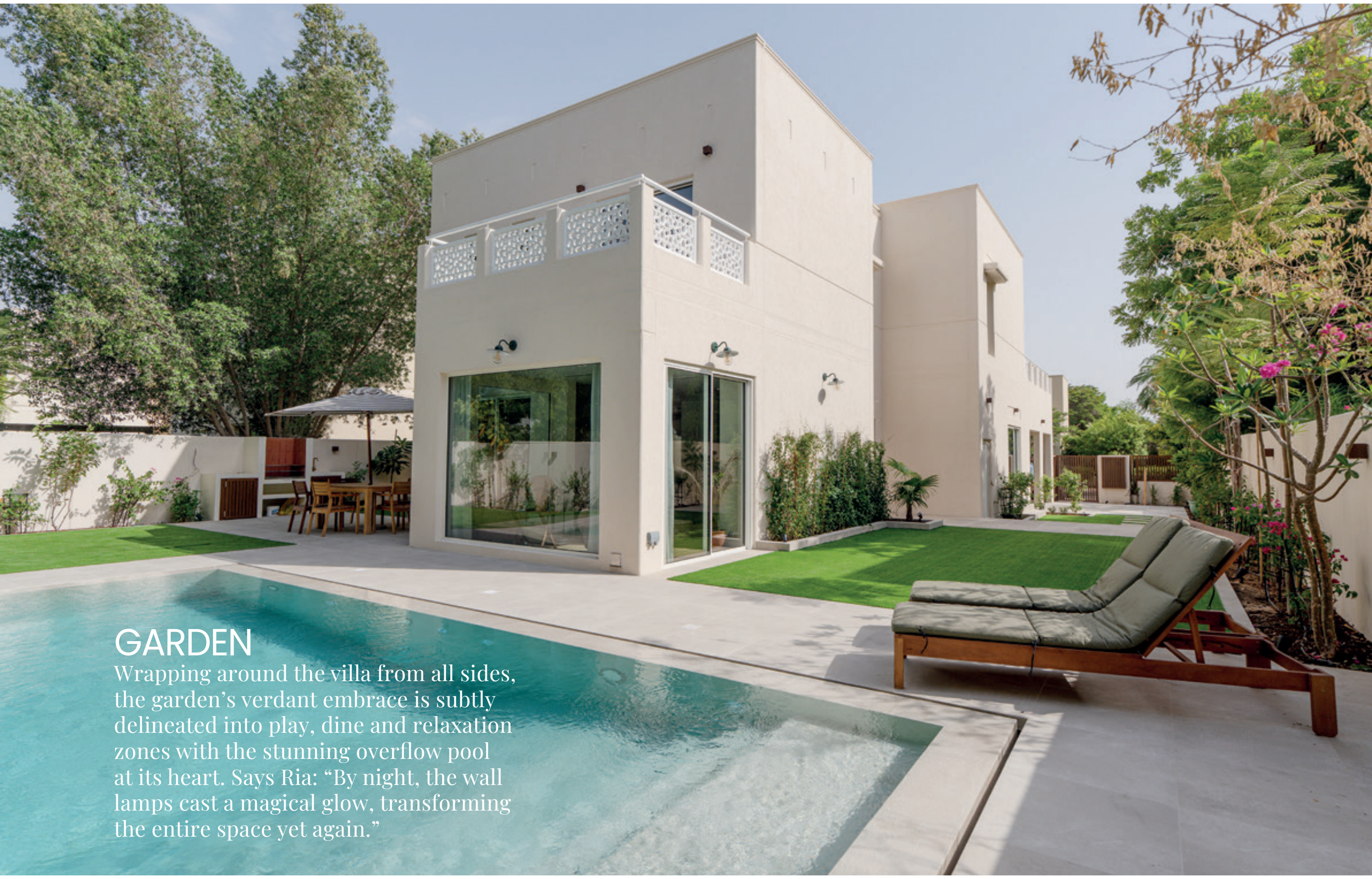
NURSERY

Florien readily admits that she didn't have a clear vision for the design of what ended up as the nursery but concedes, with a smile, that "in the end I was really quite happy with it." The beauty of the room lies in its flexibility, with a neutral, natural feel and an ample footprint in which an infant can transition to toddler phase. "The deep-set chest of drawers can accommodate a baby changing mat, making it ultra-practical in those early days, with the room offering plenty of floor space for toys and additional furnishings as they grow," notes Ria.



KITCHEN

A focal point for the home, with its extended cinder stone-topped island a family and entertaining centrepiece, the kitchen was a labour of love – and permitting – with a precast wall demolished to fully open it up. The sink is neatly tucked away to the rear of the space with a laundry room (a client non-negotiable) just beyond.

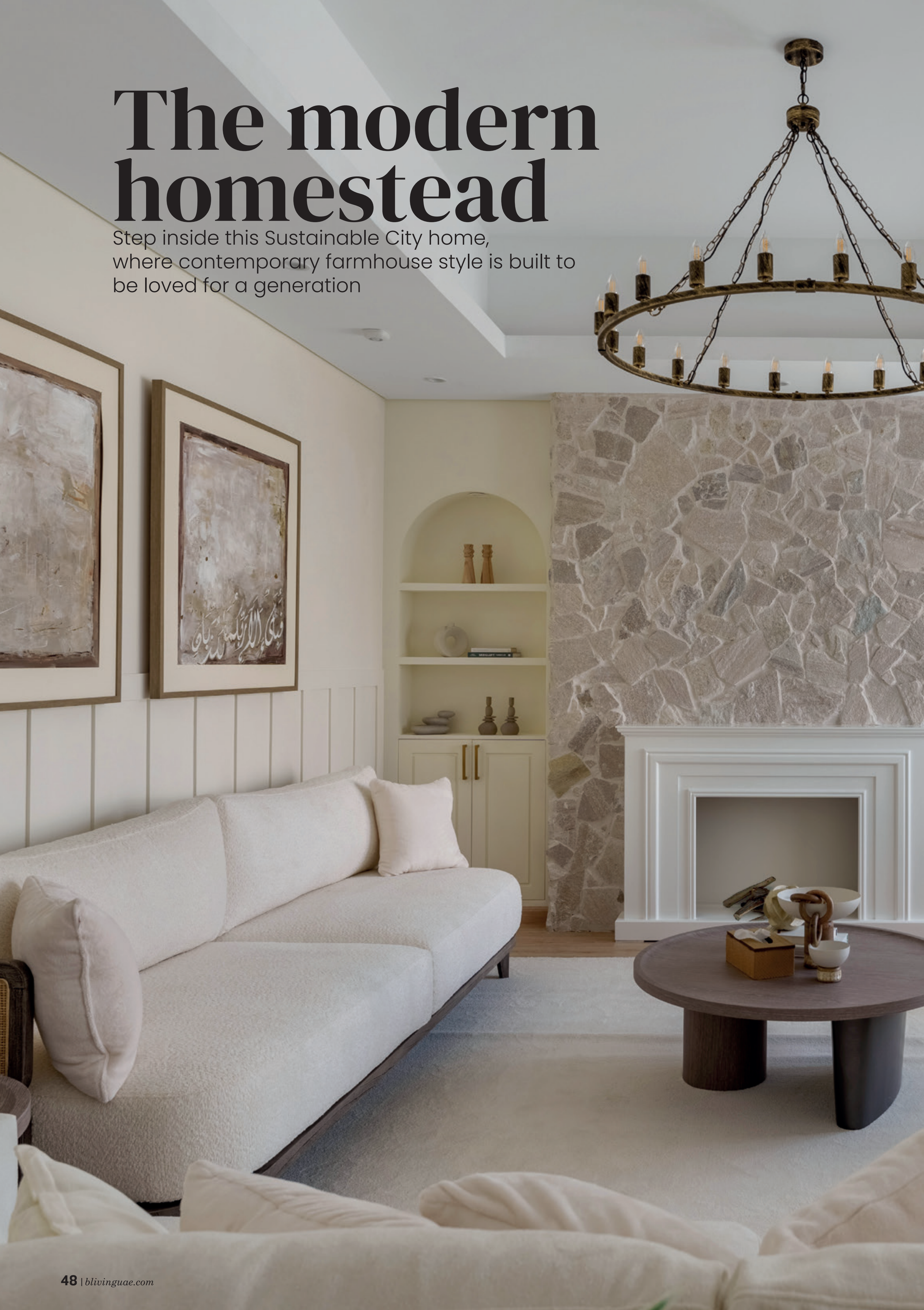


GARDEN

Wrapping around the villa from all sides, the garden's verdant embrace is subtly delineated into play, dine and relaxation zones with the stunning overflow pool at its heart. Says Ria: "By night, the wall lamps cast a magical glow, transforming the entire space yet again."

The modern homestead

Step inside this Sustainable City home, where contemporary farmhouse style is built to be loved for a generation



LOUNGE
A calm, relaxed palette of cream, wood and neutrals, paired with tactile half-panelling and considered furnishings, frames the stone fireplace. "I was initially hesitant, but it delivers an unexpected and eye-catching a focal point." Custom artworks by UAE based artist Fatima Sherjan, and a wagon-wheel chandelier, add measured character to the refined yet comfortable scheme.

> The client wanted a clean, timeless look with a nod to contemporary farmhouse influences, without being ultra-modern

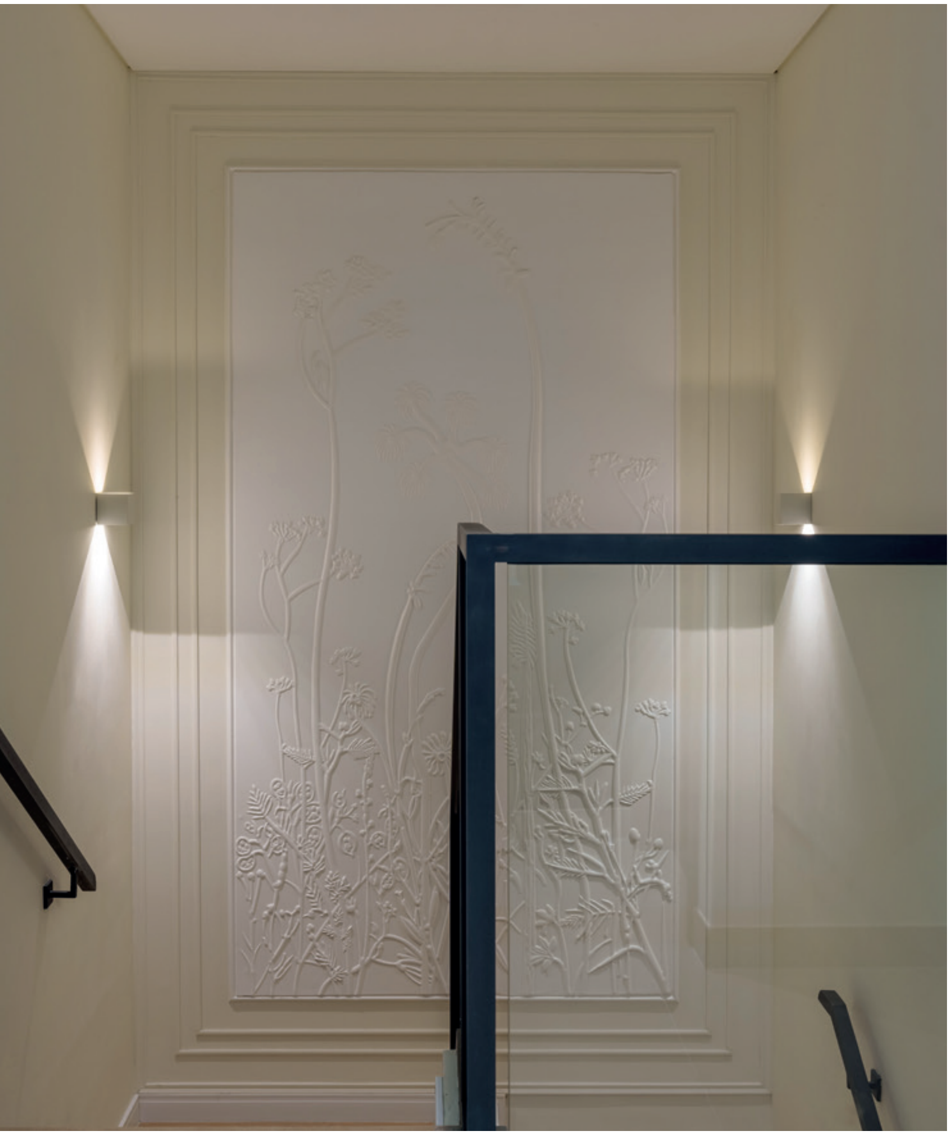
HOME NOTES

WHO LIVES HERE?

Fasila and Muhammad Arif and their two children

THE PROPERTY

A three-bedroom villa in Sustainable City



A forever home for a first-time client, Parkha Zeb of Seryaana Interior Design *(@seryaana)* connected with the owners on Instagram even before they had house keys in hand. It proved to be a natural partnership: the client arrived with clear ideas, and the brief evolved into a plan Parkha "loved from the get-go."

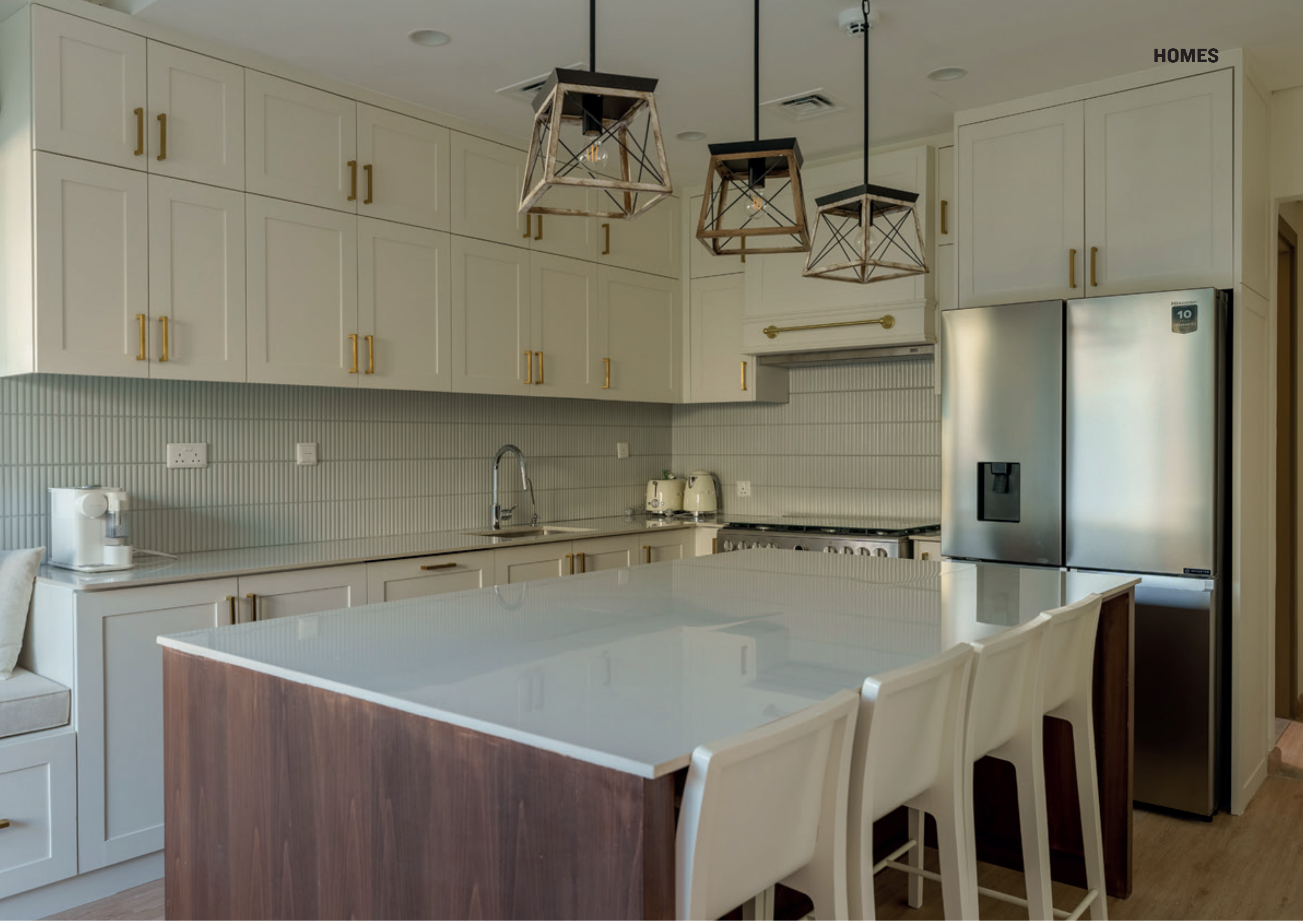
Designed for a couple with two growing children, the project called for a full transformation that aligned with the lifestyle they envisioned. "The client wanted a clean, timeless look with a nod to contemporary farmhouse influences, without being ultra-modern. Basically, a design that would be liveable for a generation without becoming swiftly dated," she explains.

In addition to two living rooms - one formal, the other a relaxed family den - Parkha reimagined the kitchen, stripping the original layout back to zero. A mood board set the tone, but she emphasises that giving her client "a lot of liberty, because the final say should always be with the homeowner who gets to live the experience," was crucial.

Conceptualised, designed and delivered within a rigorous three-month turnaround, the Seryaana team were thankfully spared the drama of major structural changes but did have to navigate the usual permitting requirements, which "always eats into the timeline."

There were also creative risks along the way, including the reinvention of an unremarkable staircase into a gallery feature. "We actually created this hand-painted 3D ivory floral wood art piece in our own studio. Framed by a double line of beading it's a conversation starter as you walk up the stairs," Parkha says.

> “We nano-protected the predominantly white and neutral furnishings, a durability must-do for a busy family home”



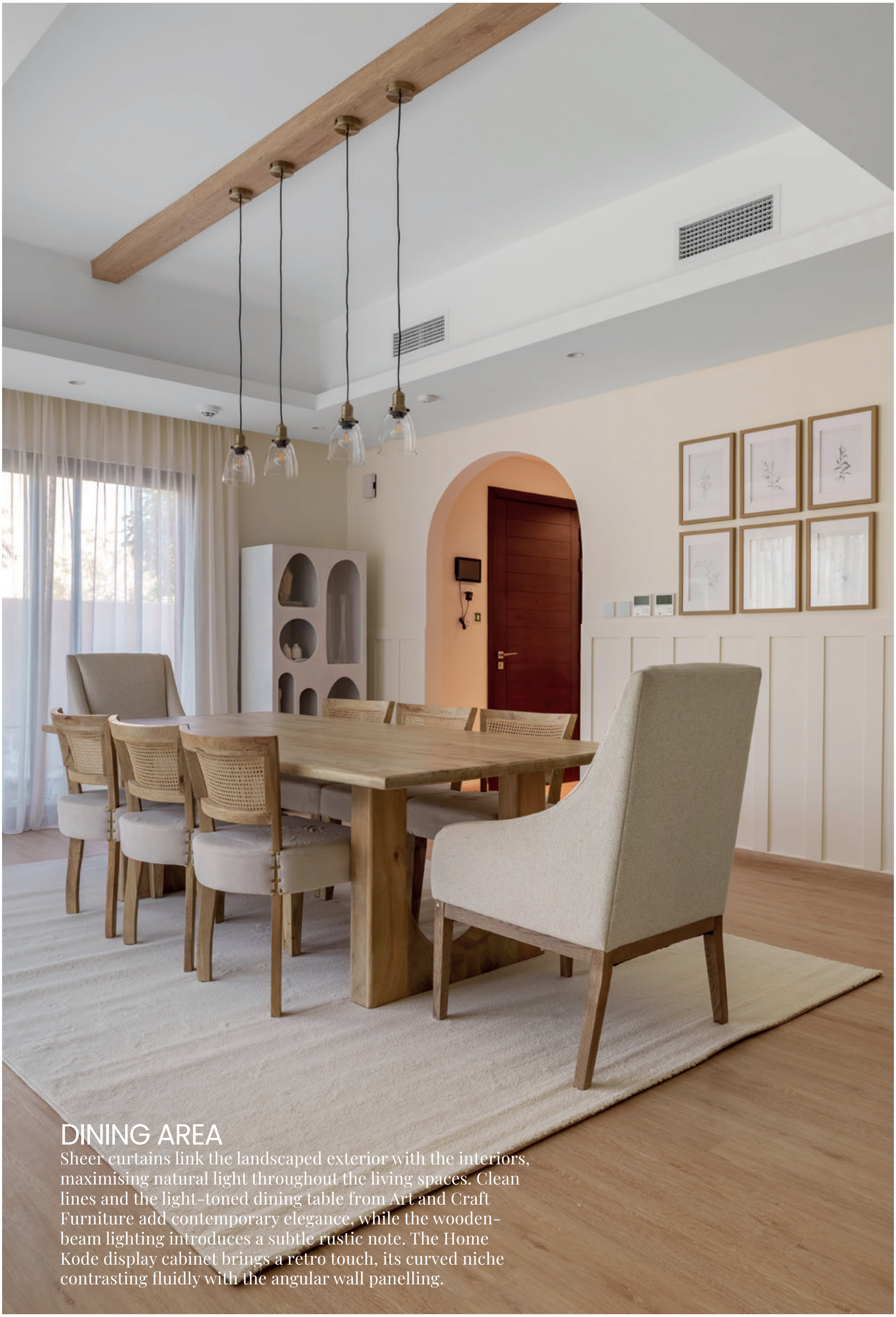
KITCHEN

Characterful yet clean and uncluttered, the kitchen design sits neatly between family infused warmth and practicality. “The space had a lot of natural light coming in, which we didn’t want to get rid of as a well-lit kitchen is always welcome. A keen cook, the client also wanted it to be user-friendly and practical while spacious,” says Parkha.

The request for a central island posed a challenge. “We were wary of crowding the space, so we kept the colour play light with a white marble island top and ivory-painted cupboards for visual cleanliness and a sense of airiness.”

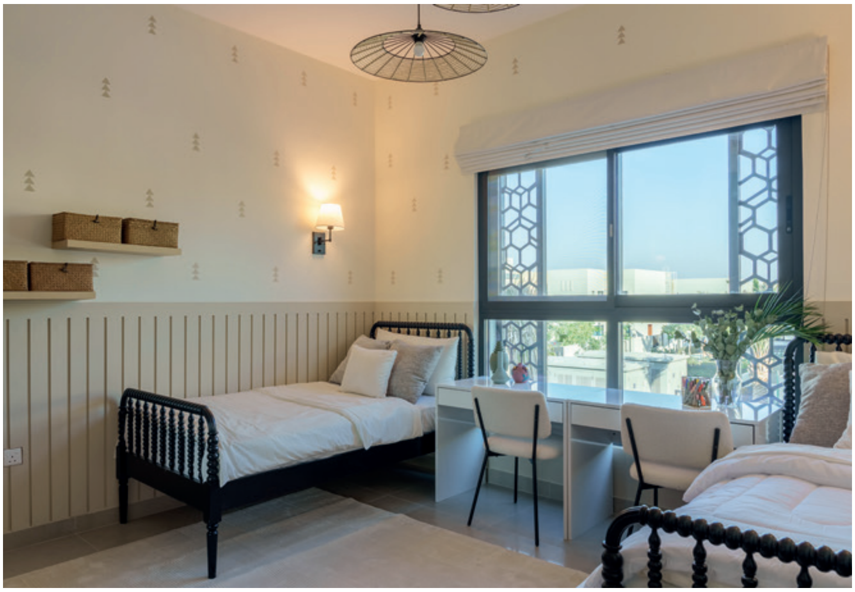
Farmhouse-style pendant lights introduce warmth and maintain continuity with the home’s broader theme.

A standout feature is the picture-window alcove. Parkha elaborates: “A thoughtful addition, this is where the client loves to sit and enjoy her morning coffee, plus it has great storage space underneath!”



DINING AREA

Sheer curtains link the landscaped exterior with the interiors, maximising natural light throughout the living spaces. Clean lines and the light-toned dining table from Art and Craft Furniture add contemporary elegance, while the wooden-beam lighting introduces a subtle rustic note. The Home Kode display cabinet brings a retro touch, its curved niche contrasting fluidly with the angular wall panelling.

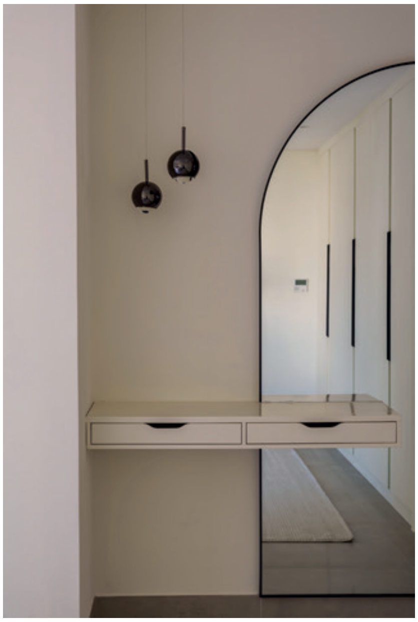


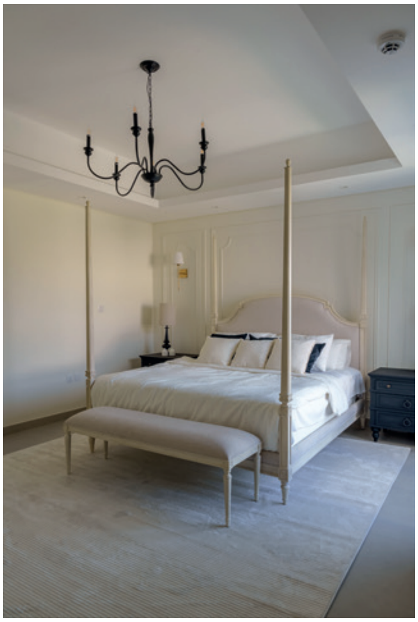
KIDS' BEDROOM

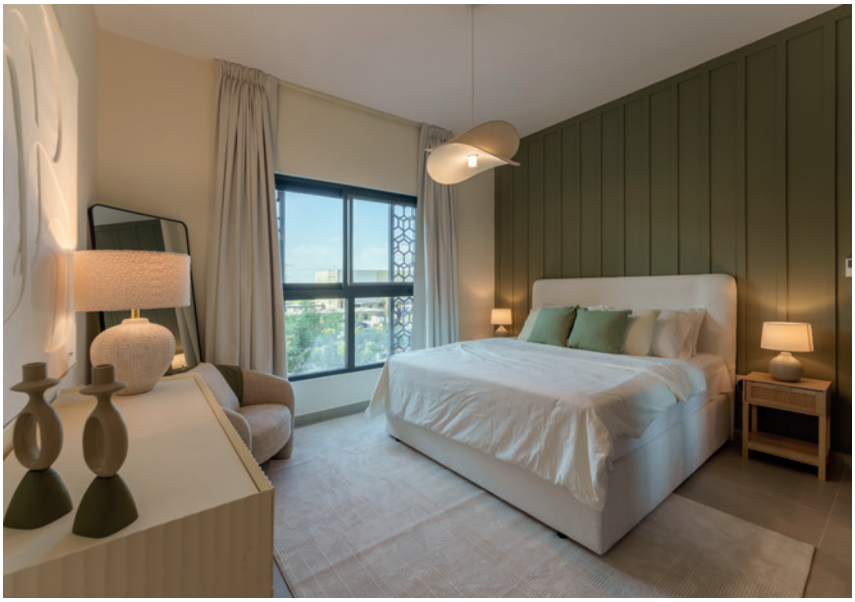
"The kids' beds were a surprise find from Crate & Barrel, as the client loved the vintage look but didn't want metal frames, and we spotted these by chance. The room needed to stay relatively neutral for a boy and girl sharing, so it had to suit both their needs. We incorporated panelling once again and gave the space a youthful touch with delicate stencil art on the wall."

MASTER BEDROOM

Upstairs, the approach to the master bedroom was conceived with a sense of adult refinement. "We painted the narrow wall between the parents' and kids' rooms black and dressed it with two Islamic art pieces." The black motif continues subtly inside with the master all white with black accents and the kids' room opposite beige with black details. A modern four-poster bed, black bedside tables, a large curved, black-framed mirror and floating white vanity complete the master's clean, composed feel.







GUEST BEDROOM

In contrast to the other rooms, the guest room features a statement wall of panelling behind the bed, painted in a rich Jotun apple green that instantly elevates the ambience. A sense of hotel-level luxury comes through in the bed linens dressing the custom-made bed, with a chandelier crafted from linen fabric adding softness. Finishing touches include abstract geometric wall art from 2XL Home and a full-length rectangular mirror positioned behind the armchair for subtle spatial depth.

In living colour

Family comfort meets a bright, open approach to interior style in this delightful Mira 2 home

> “Paula and Conor’s brief was clear – they wanted more light, better circulation, and a real sense of openness”

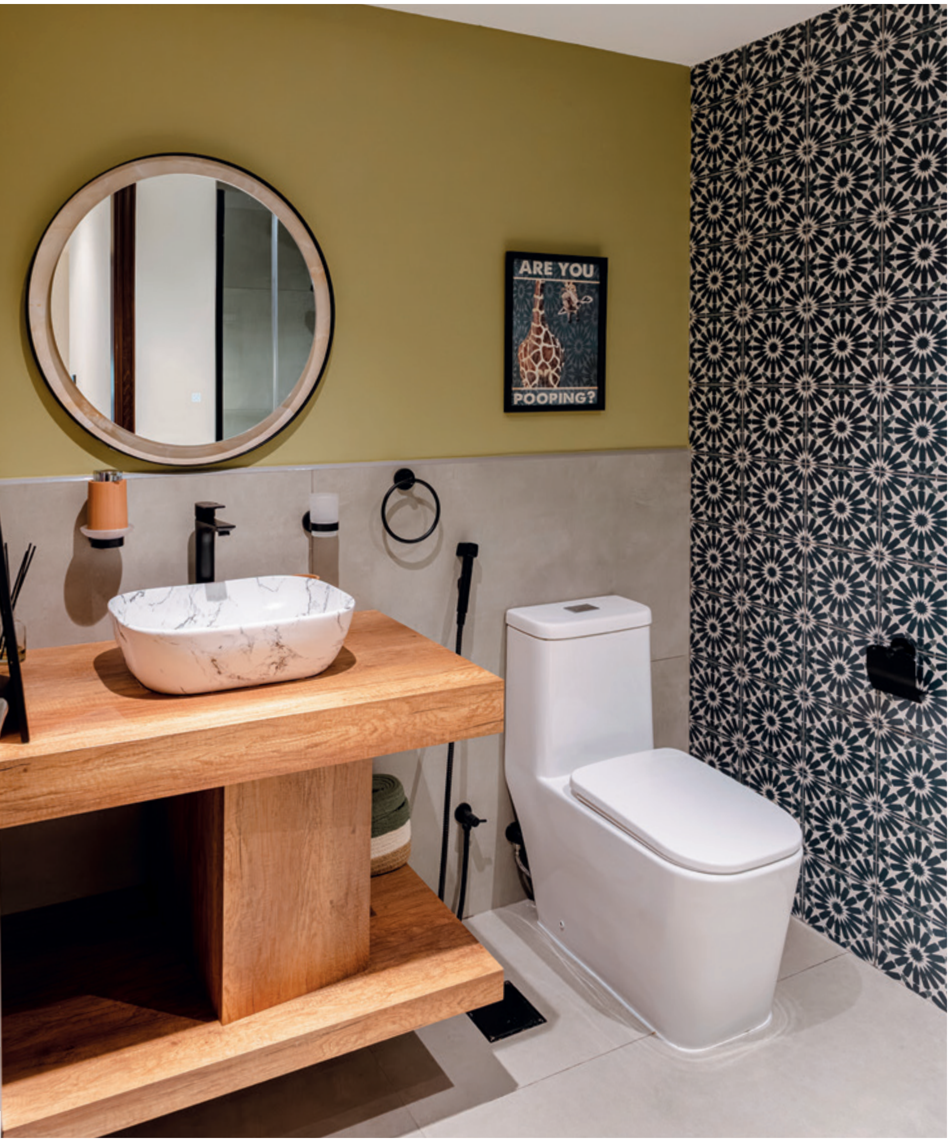
HOME NOTES

WHO LIVES HERE?

Conor and Paula MacNeill and their two young children

THE PROPERTY

A five-bedroom home in Mira 2



A compact home that didn't meet the needs of its new owners – a growing young family - for Akhil Asok and Ajesh Mohan of Origa Design (*@origadesign_uae*), the focus was to rework the interiors, opening up the ground floor footprint and creating a more fluid and interactive way of living.

"Paula and Conor's brief was clear - they wanted more light, better circulation, and a real sense of openness," Ajesh explains. With a three-month turnaround, the team delivered a series of smart space maximisation interventions that transformed the home without altering its footprint.

One of the first moves was at the entry where the former laundry room was pushed back into the maid's area, freeing up the front of the house and making the arrival experience far more welcoming.

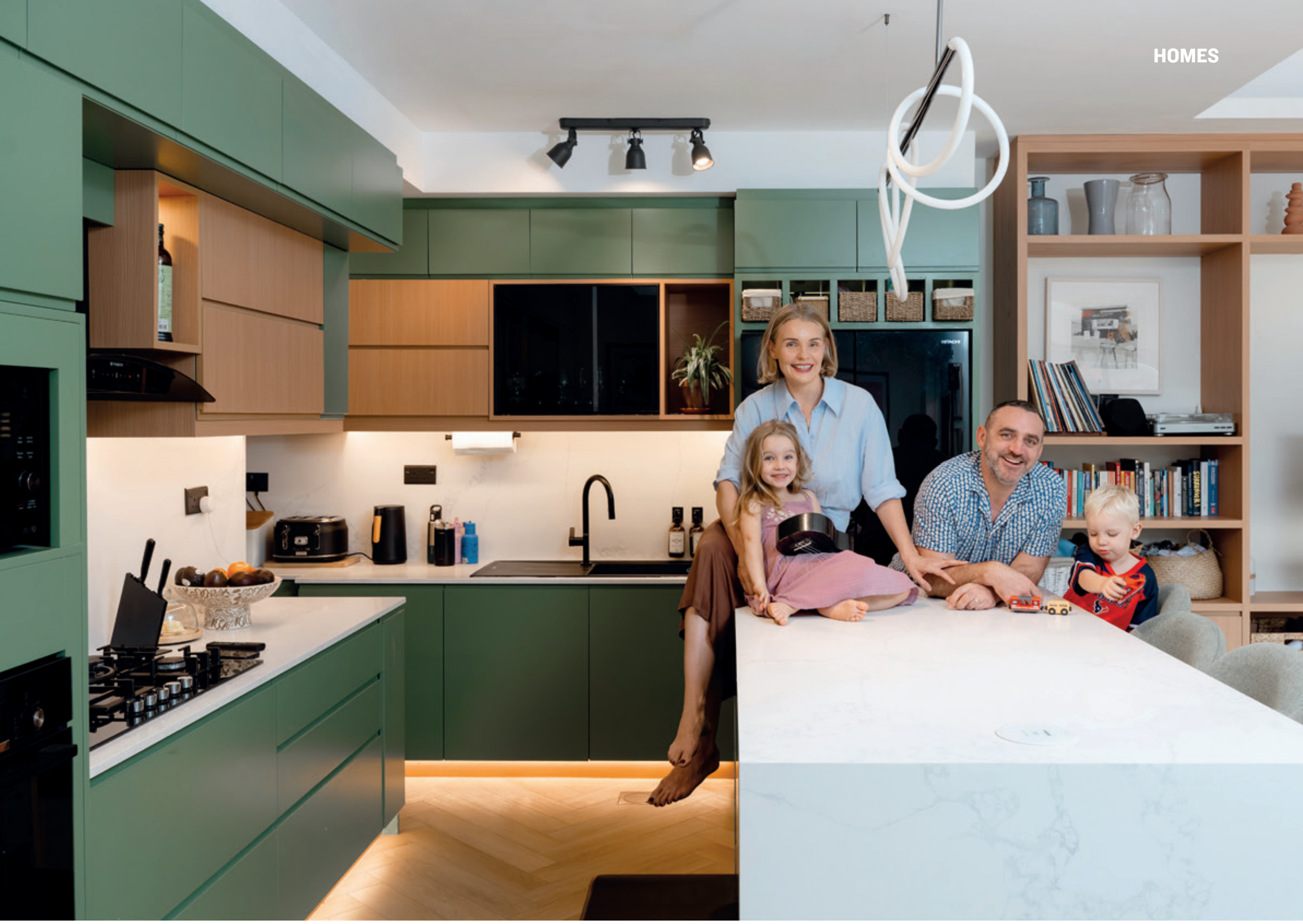
Upstairs, the designers proposed a Murphy bed to give one of the bedrooms a dual purpose as a dedicated playroom for the children that could also comfortably host guests.

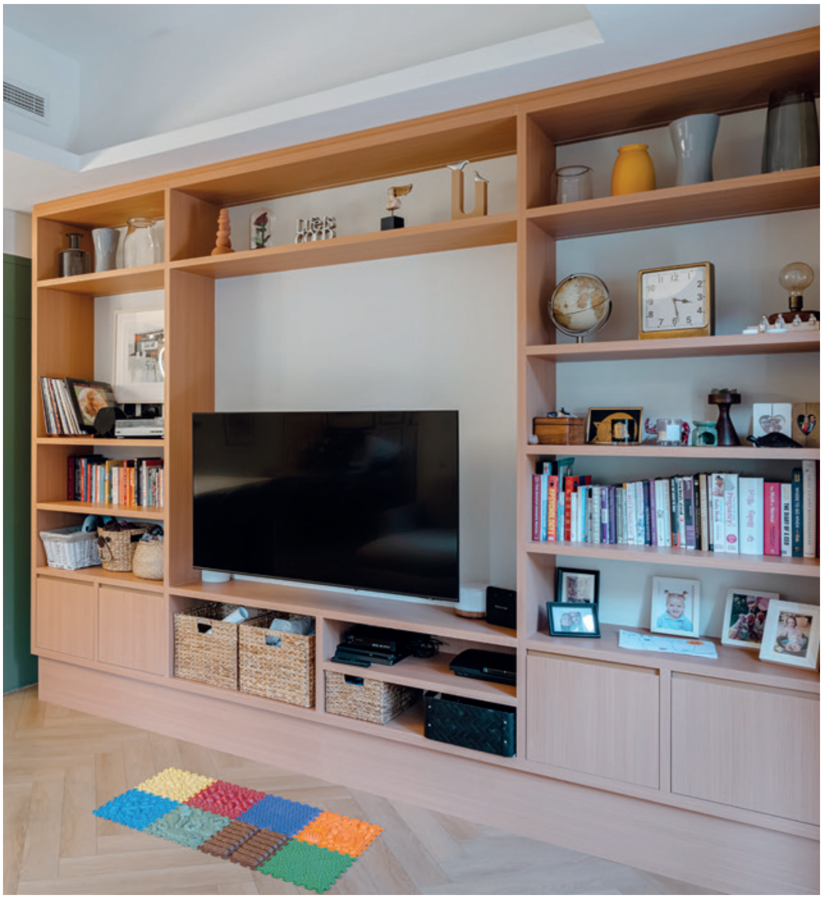
A close collaboration with the homeowners shaped the aesthetic direction. Paula had a strong vision for the colour palette and desired ambience, and the team worked around her ideas, adding tactile natural elements such as the herringbone wood flooring that now anchors the main living spaces.

In contrast, the powder room became an opportunity for a bold tiled feature wall. "This space in particular could have been a clash of colours and pattern, but together with the showpiece vanity it became a standout moment," says Akhil.

Black accents track consistently through the home – in chair frames, door details, artwork mounts, even kitchen fixtures - helping maintain visual continuity across open spaces.

> “We wanted every area to shift seamlessly from daytime functionality to evening atmosphere”





KITCHEN

The original kitchen was enclosed, and while the clients considered relocating it entirely, the designers recommended opening the existing space instead. By removing walls and extending into the unused area beneath the staircase, they created a larger, more efficient layout with valuable additional storage. The custom-built kitchen maximises every inch, with soft-touch handle fronts for a clean, minimal profile and a warm green finish for character. A central island – an essential for the family – now secures the open plan and keeps sightlines clear when the kids are playing in the living area.

TV AREA

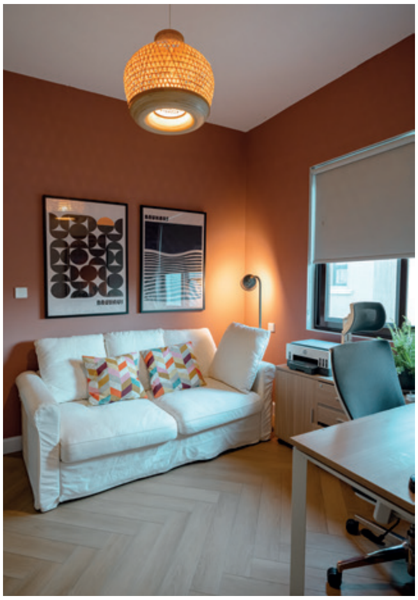
The TV wall doubles as a full-height storage system, creating a media hub that sits neatly between kitchen and living zones. This consolidated approach frees up floor space, giving the children more room to play and the family a more organised everyday environment.

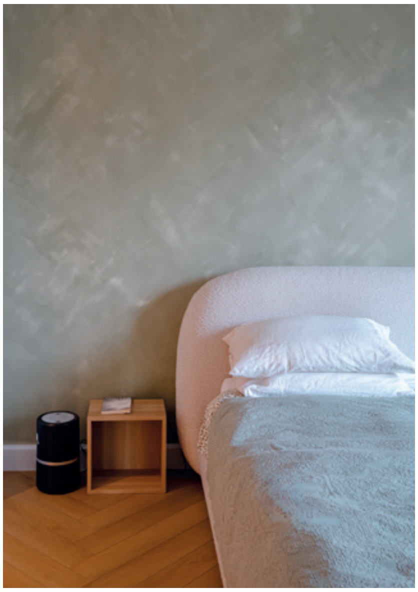
ENTRY & STAIRS

Previously opening directly onto a utility room door, the entryway was reconfigured to introduce a floor-to-ceiling shoe cabinet that discreetly conceals the service room behind it. The result is a functional yet streamlined arrival space with ample storage for daily essentials. Minimal updates were made to the staircase, which was refreshed with a terracotta-toned feature wall and artwork from the family's collection, adding warmth and personality to an otherwise compact vertical zone.

FLEXIBLE LIVING

Conor's home-working needs required a dedicated office, but the couple still wanted the room to read as a relaxed secondary living space. A linen-textured sofa maintains flexibility, while tangerine walls and curated art bring energy to the workspace. The adjacent children's bathroom was redesigned around usability: the toilet was relocated, the oversized vanity replaced with a more efficient layout, and a child-friendly bathtub became the focal point. "We also repeated the same tiling used in the powder room to maintain overall visual continuity," notes Akhil.





MASTER BEDROOM

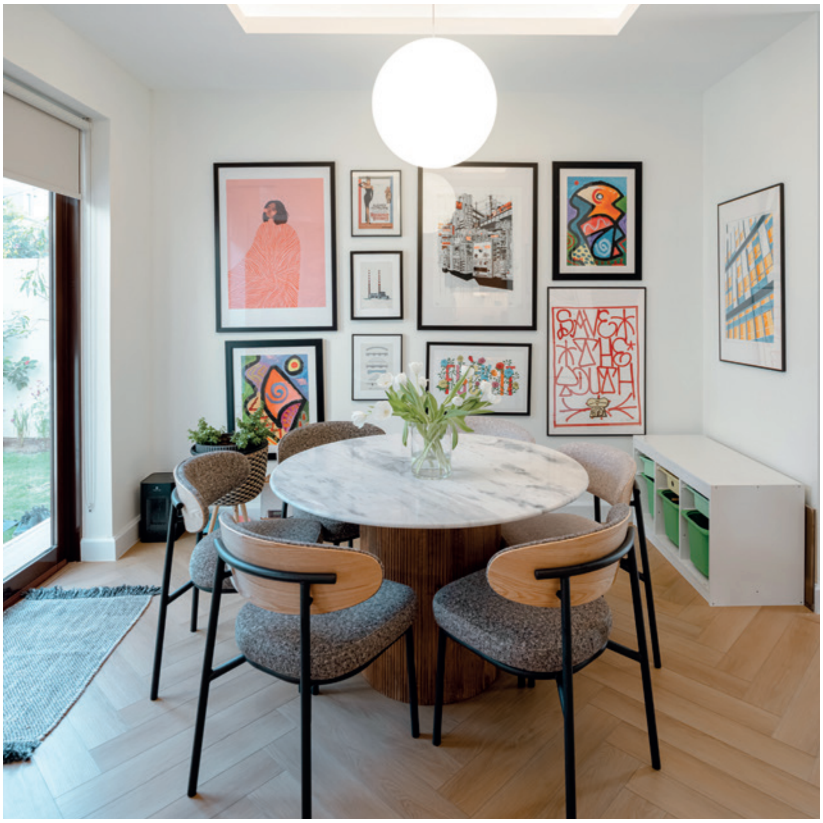
The master bedroom is designed as a calm, distinctly grown-up retreat. A green-grey brushed paint effect forms a soft yet dynamic backdrop to the bed, which is framed by a tactile bouclé headboard for a subtle hotel-like feel. A compact walk-in wardrobe was created by extending the ceiling height and building upward to maximise storage. Left open intentionally, the wardrobe becomes part of the room's architectural composition while showcasing the efficiency of the redesigned space.

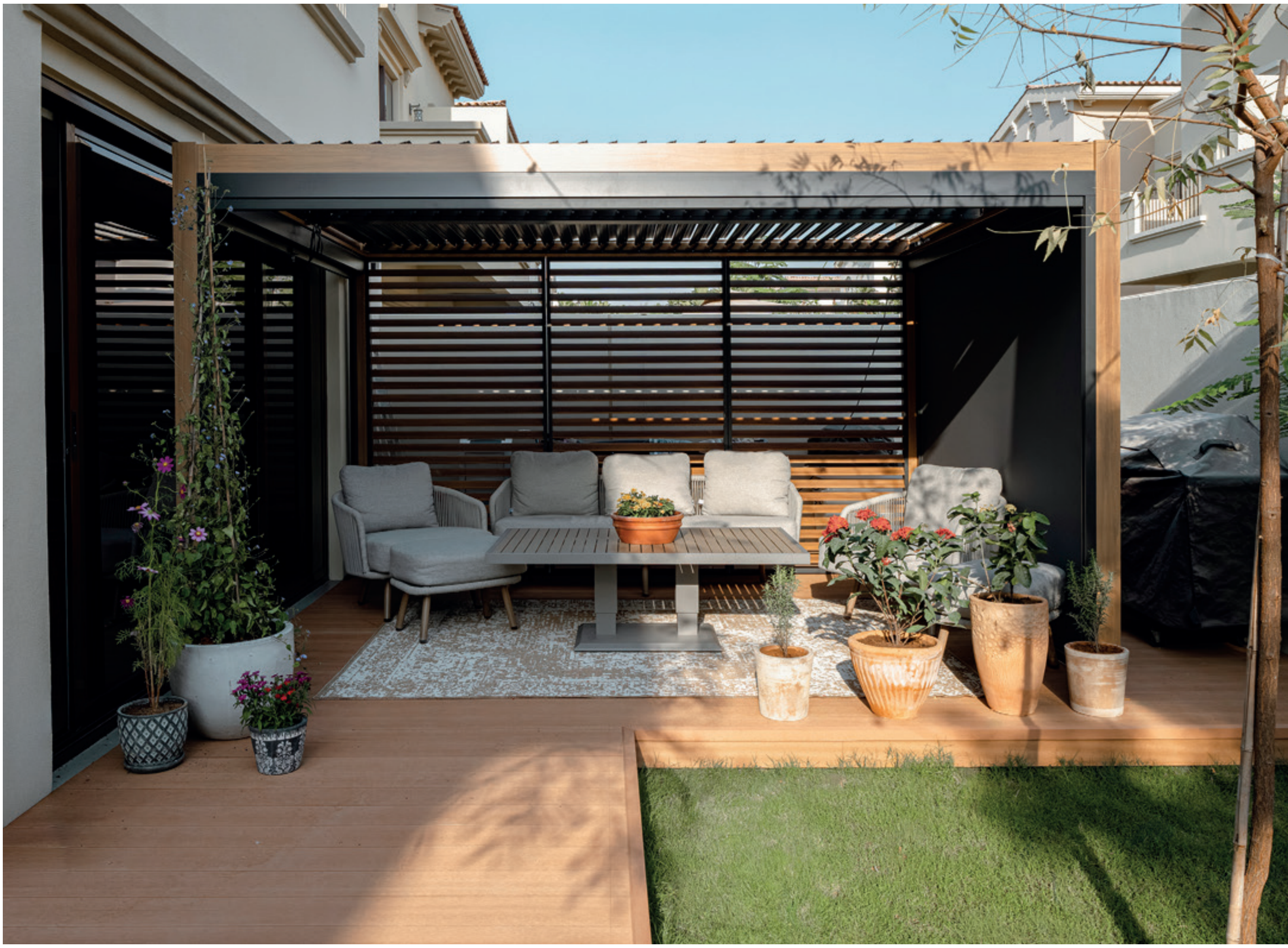
DINING AREA

“Paula loves art, and the family had an extensive collection, so we positioned key pieces around the dining zone to give it a distinct identity,” says Ajesh. This gentle zoning is reinforced by opening what was once a solid wall into a large patio window, letting natural light flood the space and visually separating dining from the main living area without physical partitions.

GARDEN

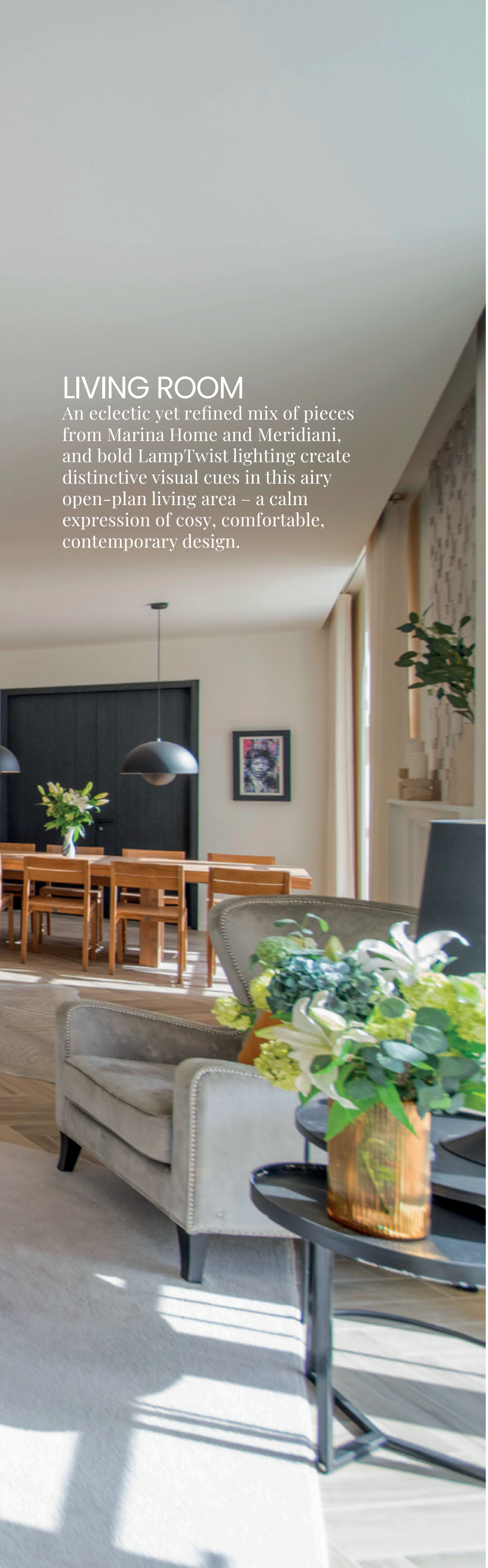
Completed later in the process, the garden continues the home’s emphasis on family togetherness. The living room now connects directly to a pergola, creating an outdoor extension of the social space. “We wanted a cosy, easy-going spot where the whole family could spend time - or where Paula and Conor could unwind in the evening once the kids were asleep,” says Akhil.





Living in the light

A Victory Heights villa designed for real life



LIVING ROOM
An eclectic yet refined mix of pieces from Marina Home and Meridiani, and bold LampTwist lighting create distinctive visual cues in this airy open-plan living area – a calm expression of cosy, comfortable, contemporary design.

> “We designed the house to support real life. Dogs, laundry, work calls, guests, kids, hosting... all of it”

HOME NOTES

WHO LIVES HERE?

Real-world family living ready

THE PROPERTY

A five-bedroom villa in Victory Heights

An interior designer with a passion for weaving sustainability into every layer of the design process, Frida Kleimert, founder of BIOME (*@biome_hometransformations*) had her eye on this tenanted Victory Heights villa even before the previous resident moved out. "I saw its potential immediately and we had eight months to plan the renovation. I wanted to transform it into a showcase of what is possible when every detail is considered," she explains.

As property owner, Frida had full control over her vision. "I imagined a calm, intuitive family home with natural flow and soul - something that felt rooted in Scandinavian simplicity, but still had a sense of ease and warmth. For me, it was about balance: functionality, emotional connection, light, movement, and texture. The kind of space that holds your life not just your furniture."

"I see a lot of families moving to Dubai who buy older homes that need reworking. I wanted to show what can happen when you start early and think holistically," she adds.

Light and spatial flow were central to the makeover with skylights a central focus, sightlines opened up, and the original footprint extended by around 50 square metres.

It was also important for Frida that the project have a collaborative element across the different spaces, including a TV room, gym, study and newly created laundry room. This took the form of working partnerships with industry experts including Effekt Design, Alonqood Carpentry, and Bagno, among others.

"For the interiors we prioritised warm whites, sandy neutrals, soft black accents, real wood, and natural stone. Every room was grounded and tactile, from the joinery to chosen curtain fabrics, to ensure the flow was beautiful and cohesive throughout," she notes.

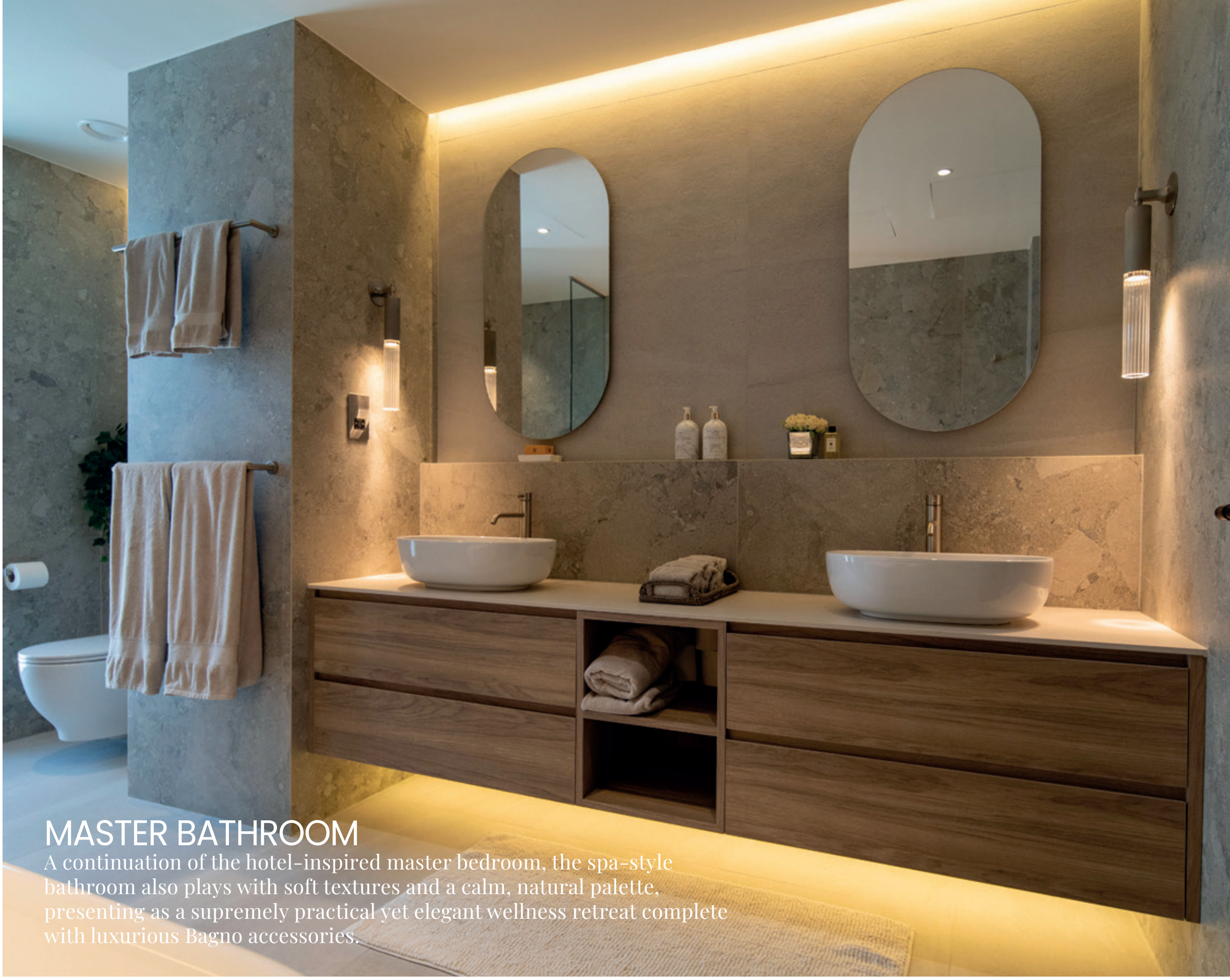
> Great design doesn't have to be extravagant, but it should always be thoughtful"

ENTRYWAY

"We wanted to present a calm, understated entrance that also featured smart family storage," says Frida. Scandi vibes exude with joinery by Alonqood and Euroart, a subtle lighting pathway illuminating the open staircase, and arch detailing seen elsewhere throughout the ground floor. In the connected living spaces, a mix of new pieces and thoughtfully refreshed heirlooms deliver personality.

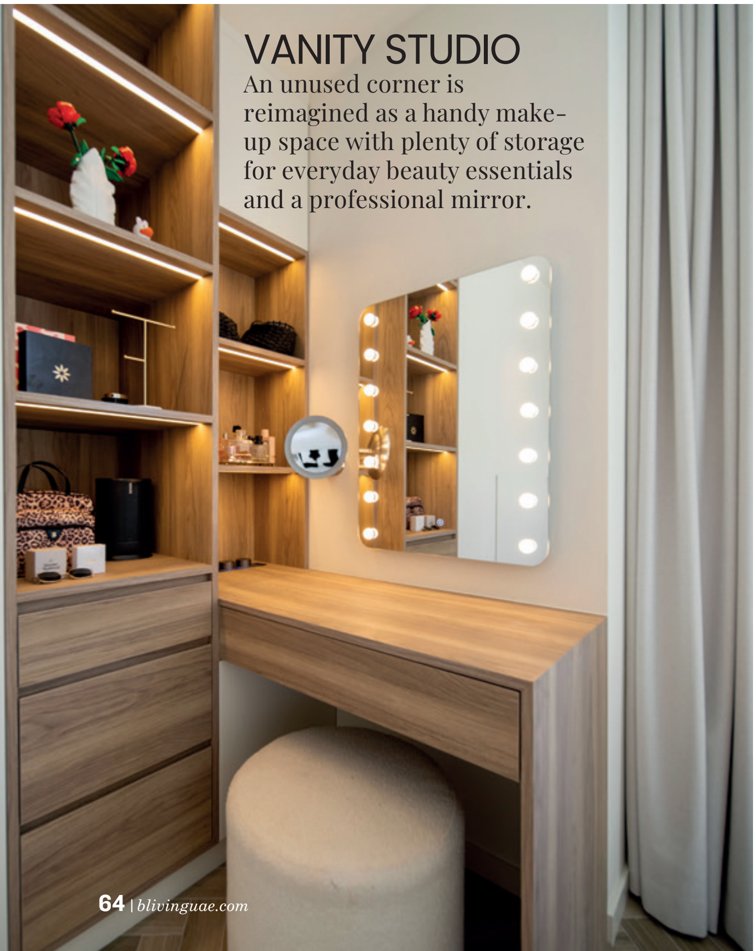
KITCHEN

With the luxury of two kitchens, as well as two staff rooms, the BIOME-designed show kitchen highlights work by Alonqood, Royal Stone finishes, and Miele appliances - pairing contemporary simplicity with refined craftsmanship. The back kitchen, though tucked discreetly behind concealed service doors, is crafted with the same meticulous attention to detail, ensuring seamless movement and effortless hosting when guests are in residence.



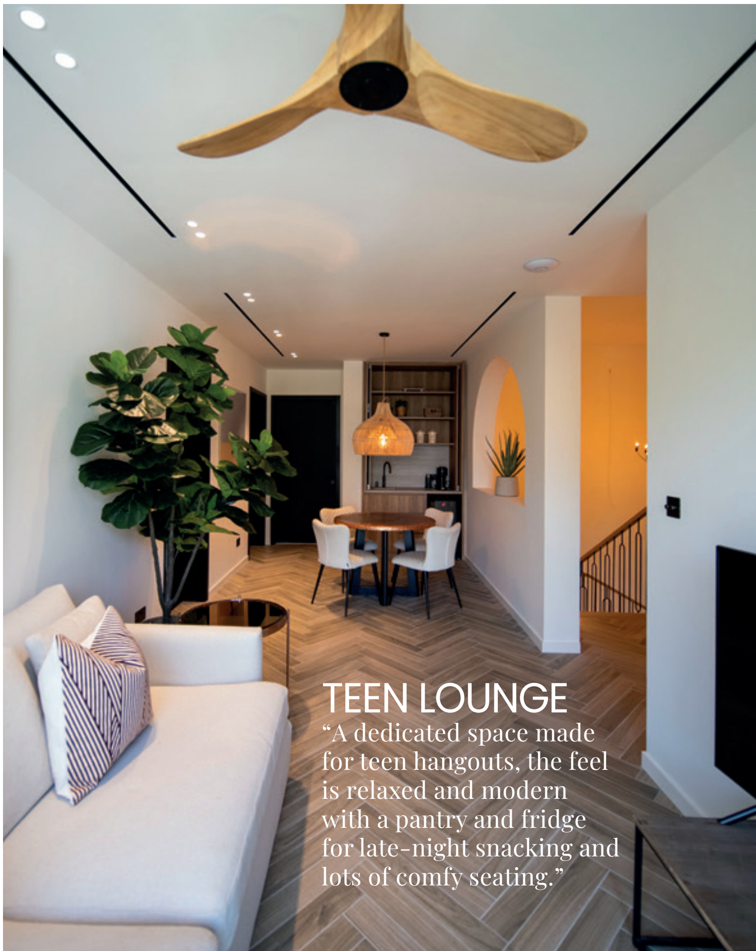
MASTER BATHROOM

A continuation of the hotel-inspired master bedroom, the spa-style bathroom also plays with soft textures and a calm, natural palette, presenting as a supremely practical yet elegant wellness retreat complete with luxurious Bagno accessories.



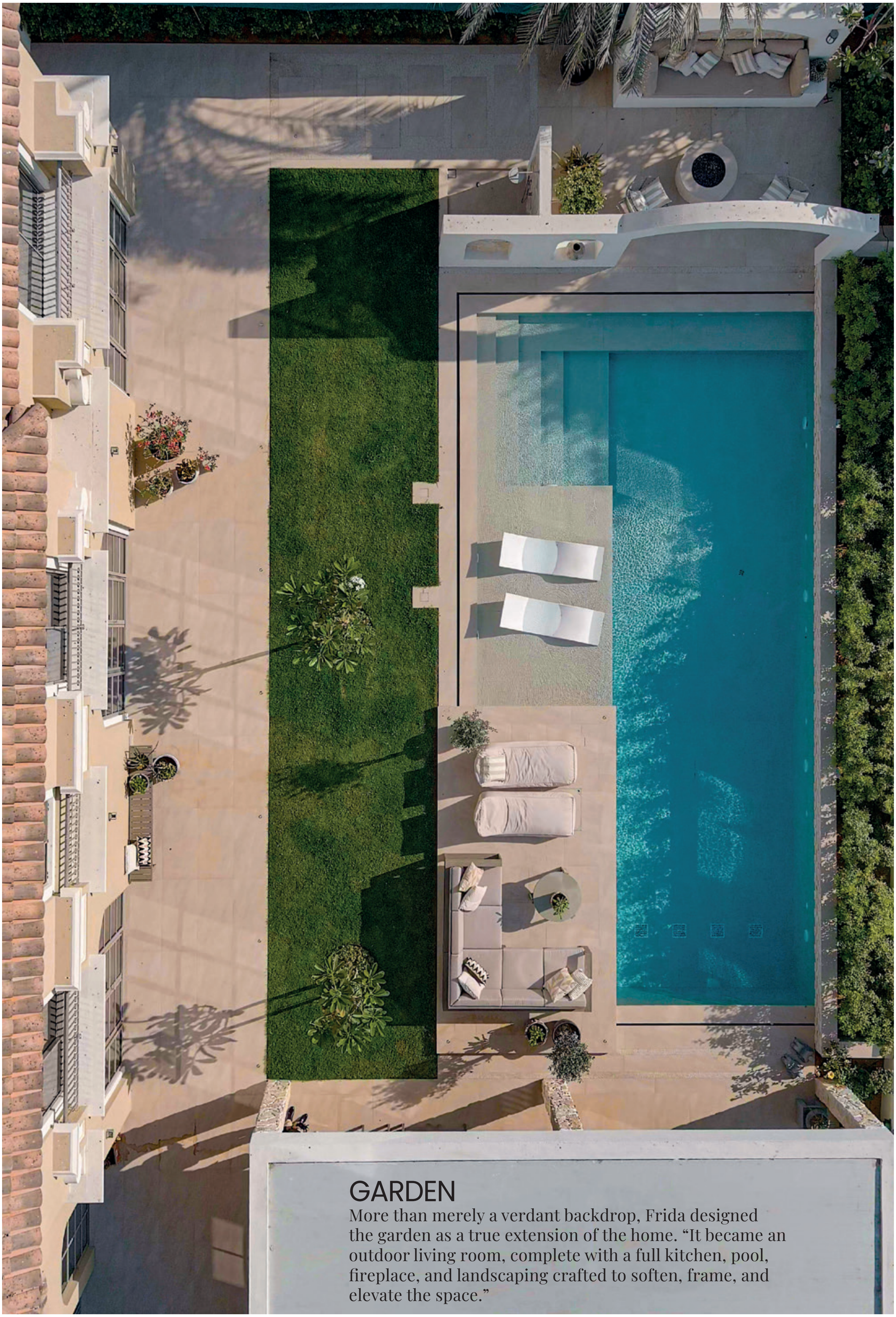
VANITY STUDIO

An unused corner is reimagined as a handy make-up space with plenty of storage for everyday beauty essentials and a professional mirror.



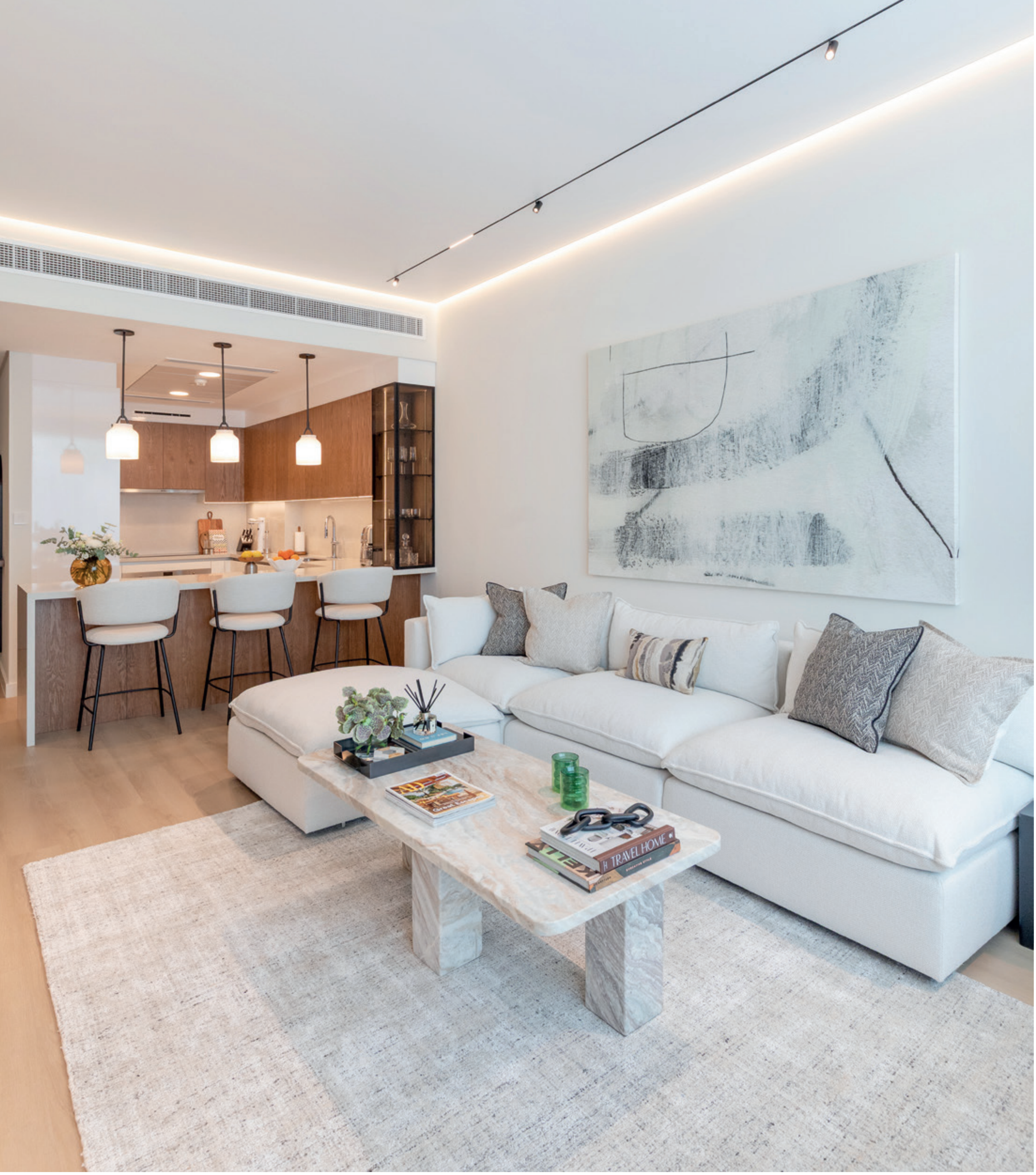
TEEN LOUNGE

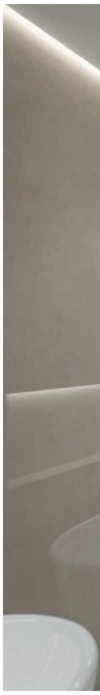
"A dedicated space made for teen hangouts, the feel is relaxed and modern with a pantry and fridge for late-night snacking and lots of comfy seating."



GARDEN

More than merely a verdant backdrop, Frida designed the garden as a true extension of the home. "It became an outdoor living room, complete with a full kitchen, pool, fireplace, and landscaping crafted to soften, frame, and elevate the space."





THE CHALLENGE

Lacking in storage, this freshly handed over apartment needed creative, functional solutions tailored for its new owners.

THE SOLUTION

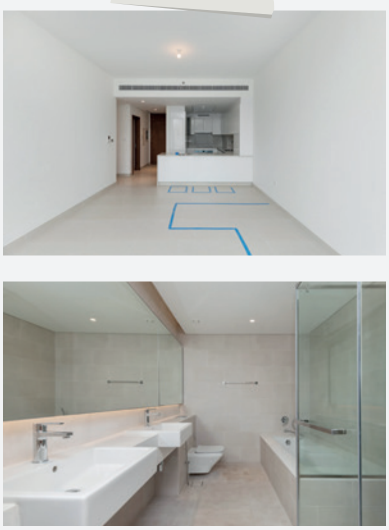
The apartment came with clear functional limitations: limited storage, and minimal flexibility in the original layout. The client asked for a large sofa in the living area, but this left no space for a dining table. The kitchen also lacked display shelving and electrical outlets for the kitchen appliances. Storage was similarly missing in the bathrooms and powder room, while the maid's room, which was not a homeowner requirement, presented a valuable opportunity to introduce a walk-in wardrobe and additional household storage. Through considered, space-efficient interventions, the apartment was reimagined with integrated storage, improved flow, and multifunctional zones, transforming a basic, newly handed-over home into a smart, organised, and stylish sanctuary.

Insider insight

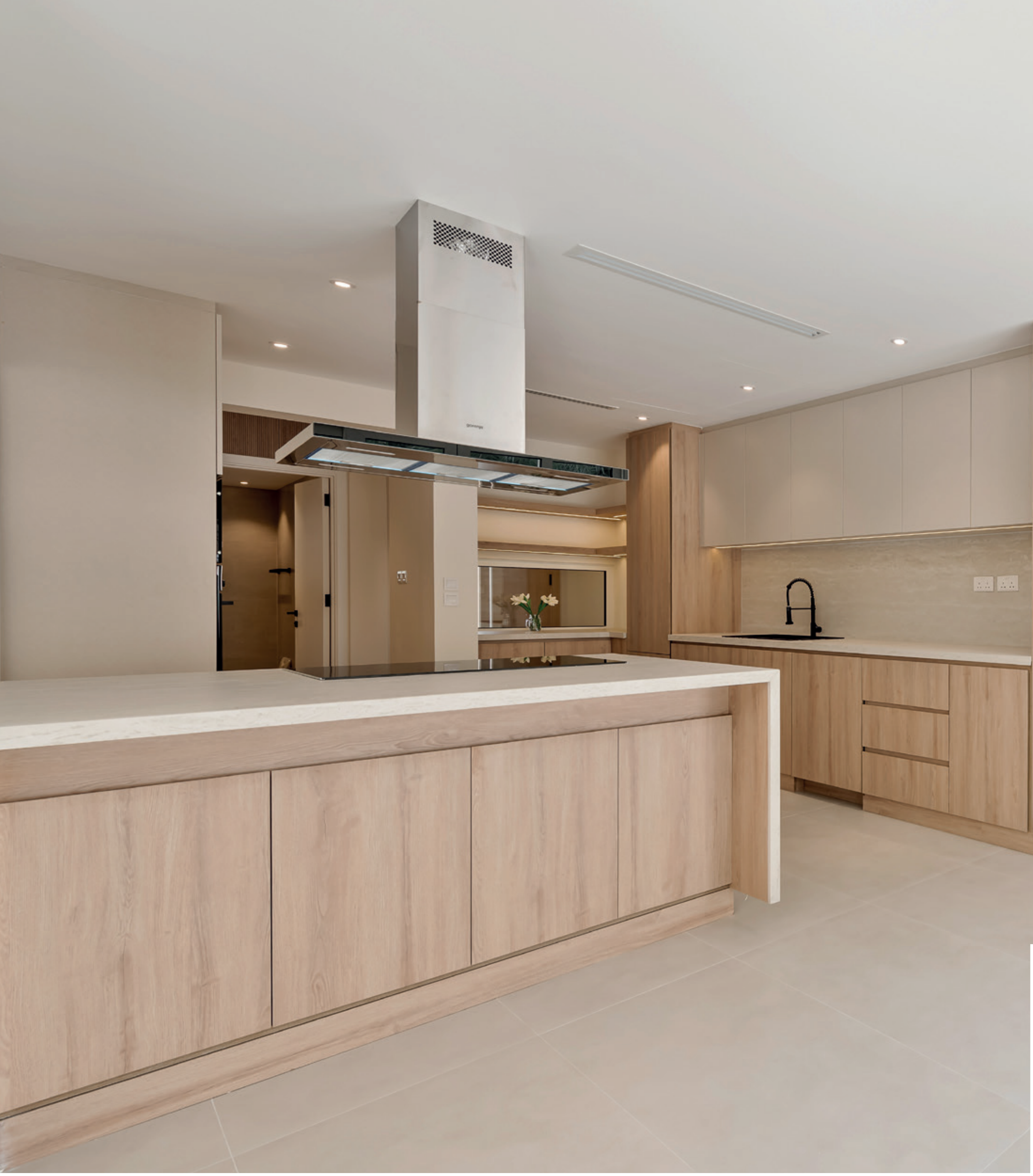
- The depth of the base cabinets under the kitchen counter was reduced in order to create ample legroom for bar seating, offering a practical alternative to a traditional dining table.
- A display cabinet was a client must with one of the kitchen units converted into a glass-fronted showcase, which avoided the need to pull apart the entire kitchen.
- The placement of a large, custom-designed TV unit in the living area added warmth and provided generous hidden storage.
- Sleek new cabinets and open shelving delivered function and elegance in all bathrooms, including the powder room.
- The former maid's room was transformed into a walk-in wardrobe, while the adjacent bathroom was the perfect solution for much-needed and highly practical household item storage space.

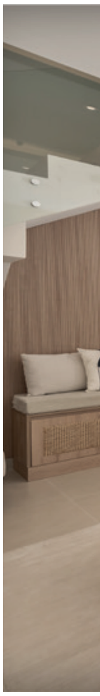
The Designer

- Seher Karaca of Villa Number Nine *(@villanumber9)*



Before





THE CHALLENGE

Delivering villa-level luxury in traditional townhouse layout to create a home that feels larger, calmer, and distinctly upscale.

THE SOLUTION

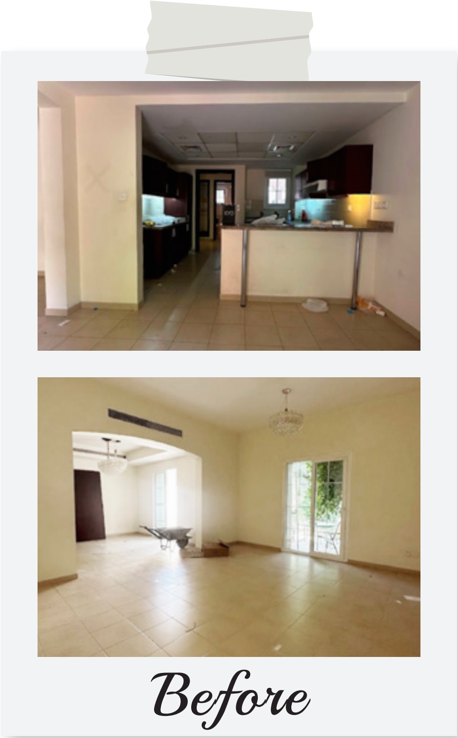
The ground floor needed to breathe, and that became the starting point. The original layout felt heavy, dark, and boxed-in, so the entire downstairs footprint was reconfigured with special focus on the kitchen and living areas. This created a light, open-plan space that feels calm the moment you walk in. In terms of colour palette, the direction was contemporary coastal, keeping everything soft and natural. Oak tones, rattan details, louvered panels, and built-in seating added depth without overwhelming the room. The goal was to create a space that feels warm and elevated yet remains practical for everyday living. Every choice - from materials to openings to circulation - was carefully curated to achieve villa-standard clarity and openness within a footprint that did not originally allow for it.

Insider insight

- The arrival experience was reframed by extending the entryway, replacing the dated vertical window with a sleek horizontal kitchen-facing one, and adding a glass front-door panel to increase natural light.
- The original kitchen and dining area were demolished, with a new opening introduced to create unrestricted open-plan flow between zones, resulting in a more social, connected and expansive living experience.
- A custom limewash feature wall with integrated bench and planter anchors the kitchen-dining space, improving functionality, increasing seating and elevating the area for everyday use and entertaining.
- Dated understairs storage was removed and the wall opened to create a floating-stair effect, with panelled finishes and built-in seating becoming a design feature.
- Indoor-outdoor flow was transformed with bifold doors, sliders and perceived height adjustments that maximise natural light and visually connect the home with the garden.
- The layering of curved furniture, statement lighting, greenery and soft accessories unify the scheme, delivering a modern, intentional and effortlessly cohesive living space.

The Designer

- Saba Malik of Zen Maison *(@zenmaisonme)*



The betterhomes perspective

This has been another year of record growth for Dubai's property market, which continues to reach new highs. The first two quarters delivered exceptional performance, particularly in the luxury segment (properties valued at AED 15 million and above) with strong activity also recorded across both villas and townhouses.

Q3 2025 also saw high transaction volumes, but it signalled a maturing phase in the cycle, as a growing share of deals shifted toward smaller units. Buyers are diversifying their portfolios and adapting to evolving market conditions, balancing investment potential with lifestyle considerations.

In the first nine months of the year, Dubai's residential market recorded 147,000 transactions totalling AED 400 billion, underscoring sustained investor demand. Nearly 35,000 new units were delivered during the same period, supporting market absorption and reflecting the city's continued development momentum.

Population growth remains a pivotal driver of Dubai's real estate sector. In 2025, Dubai's population increased by approximately 5.5%, welcoming around 208,000 new residents and surpassing the four million mark for the first time. This accelerated growth is expected to continue at a similar pace, reinforcing housing demand across all segments, from luxury villas to well-located apartments.

Price appreciation remained at an all-time high, with average sales prices reaching AED 1,683 per square foot by October - a 14.3% year-on-year increase. Larger homes continue to command a premium due to demand for privacy and space, while apartments saw strong uptake among families seeking amenity-rich communities in strategic locations.

Several factors underpin Dubai's population surge, including strong employment opportunities, an investor-friendly environment, zero income tax, full foreign ownership, and increasingly attractive long-term visa pathways. Lifestyle and infrastructure advantages, from world-class retail to leisure and connectivity, further enhance the emirate's appeal. A rising population drives demand not only in housing but also across transportation, retail, and essential services, supporting Dubai's evolution as an international gateway destination.

Despite rapid price growth, Dubai remains highly competitive compared to other global hubs.

Looking ahead, the UAE real estate market is positioned for continued growth, supported by a robust macroeconomic outlook. The IMF projects UAE GDP to expand by 4.8% in 2025, with non-oil GDP expected to grow by 5.1% in both 2025 and 2026. Inflation and unemployment are expected to remain low. The government's ongoing diversification into tourism, technology, and renewable energy, alongside initiatives such as hybrid work promotion and metro network expansion, further reinforces long-term attractiveness.

Over 200,000 new units are expected to enter the market by 2027, supporting sustained growth. Dubai continues to attract investors and high-net-worth individuals, maintaining its status as a leading international property destination with a resilient, dynamic real estate market.

Louis Harding
CEO of betterhomes

Market snapshot

Want to know the current value of your property? Considering a buy-to-rent investment? Check our latest market snapshot and find out which communities are current Dubai hotspots

SALES

VILLAS & TOWNHOUSES	AVERAGE SALES PRICE (AED PER SQUARE FOOT)	% INCREASE Q3'24 VS. Q3'25
Palm Jumeirah	7,066	56%
Dubai Sports City	1,834	33%
Jumeirah Golf Estates	2,417	33%
Jumeirah Islands	4,367	31%
Al Barari	1,588	26%
Al Furjan	1,677	26%
Tilal Al Ghaf	2,073	19%
Arabian Ranches	2,261	17%
Jumeirah Park	2,252	15%
Damac Hills	1,839	2%

APARTMENTS	AVERAGE SALES PRICE (AED PER SQUARE FOOT)	% INCREASE Q3'24 VS. Q3'25
Living Legends	1,033	43%
Barsha Heights (Tecom)	1,592	35%
Town Square	1,439	23%
Jumeirah Village Circle	1,481	13%
Al Khail Heights	839	11%
Jumeirah Village Triangle	1,526	11%
Dubai South	1,543	9%
Arjan	1,391	5%
Dubai Sports City	1,216	5%
Motor City	1,367	1%

RENTAL

VILLAS & TOWNHOUSES	AVERAGE ANNUAL RENT* (AED)	% INCREASE Q3'24 VS. Q3'25
Jumeirah Golf Estates	618,000	34%
Jumeirah Islands	915,000	26%
Tilal Al Ghaf	340,000	25%
Al Furjan	239,000	17%
Jumeirah Village Circle	182,000	12%
Arabian Ranches	302,000	10%
Dubai Sports City	360,000	9%
Jumeirah Park	353,000	6%
Al Barari	266,347	4%
Damac Hills	241,000	3%

APARTMENTS	AVERAGE ANNUAL RENT* (AED)	% INCREASE Q3'24 VS. Q3'25
Dubai South	67,000	16%
Al Khail Heights	61,000	14%
Motor City	83,000	12%
Dubai Sports City	57,000	11%
Al Furjan	76,000	10%
Dubai Production City	51,000	9%
Jumeirah Village Triangle	67,000	8%
Town Square	69,000	6%
City Walk	254,000	5%
Al Jaddaf	72,000	4%

Click the QR code
to access our latest
market reports

All data and figures referenced are as of Q3 2025
Source: Property Monitor (propertymonitor.com)

HOT PROPERTIES

Three leading agents at betterhomes give us an exclusive look at a selection of the best homes for sale in the neighbourhoods they know and love

Meet the agents

Salman Vali

Business Bay

"Trustworthy, knowledgeable and reliable, I have the right combination of resources to support investors and end users alike, along with a fantastic luxury inventory in the epicentre of Dubai."

Jessica Hayward

Motor City

"Hardworking, trustworthy and committed to going the extra mile for my clients, I ensure their needs are met with dedication, integrity, and genuine care, which nurtures outstanding results and happy investors."

Victor Danu

Dubai Marina

"People skills, attention to detail and a no-nonsense approach to client relationships is my calling card, and my finely tuned market knowledge allows me share invaluable insights on all aspects of buying, selling or letting properties."

My top picks

To view any of these premium homes, call me on 058 599 0694

AED8.4 million

The Address Residences Dubai Opera Tower 2

A PRIME by betterhomes listing, this branded residence sits at the cultural heart of Downtown Dubai. Styled with the signature quality of the globally renowned Address brand and gifted with jaw-dropping views of Burj Khalifa and Dubai Fountain, it also benefits from direct access to the boulevard and Dubai Mall. ***To find out more, call me quoting the reference code AP726018S RERA Permit No. 7131138601***

Bed: 3 **Bath:** 4 **Parking:** 2 **Size:** 1,563 sqft

AED18 million

Address BVLD Sky Collection

Penthouse living with Burj Khalifa views is enough to seal the deal, but the opulence includes an expansive living and dining space designed with elevated contemporary living in mind. Fully serviced with on-demand cleaning twice weekly and an exceptional collection of leisure facilities that make this a truly desirable community, why settle for less? ***To find out more, call me quoting the reference code AP525259S RERA Permit No. 7117460168***

Bed: 4 **Bath:** 6 **Parking:** 2 **Size:** 2,840 sqft

> *“Designed with elevated contemporary living in mind”*

AED16.5 million

Attareen Residences, Old Town Island

A rare lakefront gem that delivers the ultimate blend of tranquillity and urban convenience, this stunning home is primed for a homeowner who loves to be at the heart of the action. Built over three levels, with a large open-plan living area, entertainment hub, and maid’s room, it’s mere steps away from Downtown Dubai’s legendary lifestyle. ***To find out more, call me quoting the reference code TH515451S RERA Permit No. 7119094300***

Bed: 3 **Bath:** 6 **Parking:** 2 **Size:** 3,826 sqft

> “Ample space for a growing family”

AED3.9 million

Elan, Tilal Al Ghaf

A modern townhouse, with maid’s room, made for relaxed family living, retreat from the hustle and bustle of city life and settle into a resort-style community nestled amid lush green spaces. Pet friendly with endless leisure facilities on the doorstep, this contemporary home offers ample space for a growing family and a secure, welcoming environment. ***To find out more, call me quoting the reference code TH746726S RERA Permit No. 69301511814***

Bed: 3 Bath: 4 Parking: 2 Size: 2,142 sqft

My top picks

Ready to explore your new home?
Call me on
058 568 9694

AED13 million

Alaya, Tilal Al Ghaf

An exceptional residence from every angle, this detached villa with elevator, offers a private pool and zen ambience that flows throughout the home. A grand double-height entrance sets the scene while spacious master suites feature custom closets, a European kitchen combines style and functionality, and the outdoor majlis connects interiors and the landscaped garden. ***To find out more, call me quoting the reference code VI724504S RERA Permit No. 65422870233***

Bed: 5 Bath: 6 Parking: 4 Size: 6,028 sqft

AED4.7 million

Elan, Tilal Al Ghaf

Tranquil, private and surrounded by greenery, seamless open plan living is the concept centered around a modern kitchen boasting high-end finishes and welcoming, light-filled lounge and dining areas. Currently tenanted and due to be vacated in 2026, the property is primed to offer immediate rental income and long-term end-user potential.
To find out more, call me quoting the reference code BH-S-745630 RERA Permit No. 69301541212

Bed: 4 Bath: 4 Parking: 2 Size: 2,380 sqft

My top picks

Call me on 050 690 5021 and we can view these amazing homes together

AED24 million

Jumeirah Gate Tower 2

A one-of-a-kind home with unrestricted sea views, located in The Address Jumeirah Resort and Spa, this luxury-first property enjoys a premium high floor setting and is packed with upmarket surprises. Vacant on transfer, enjoy access to the world's highest infinity pool and nine world-class restaurants, as well as a study, storage room, and office. ***To find out more, call me quoting the reference code AP747740S RERA Permit No. 7135327034***

Bed: 4 **Bath:** 5 **Parking:** 2 **Size:** 3,058 sqft

AED12.95 million

Al Fattan Marine Tower, Jumeirah Beach Residence

A stunning Vastu-compliant, fully furnished penthouse, the wow moments come one after another from the huge living and dining area with its stunning panoramic sea views, high ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows to the doble-size master bedroom, and premium brand equipped open kitchen that's the perfect base for refined entertaining. ***To find out more, call me quoting the reference code AP580051 RERA Permit No. 71265975505***

Bed: 3 **Bath:** 4 **Parking:** 2 **Size:** 4,081 sqft

> *“The perfect base for refined entertaining”*

AED2.7 million

Green Lake Tower 3, Jumeirah Lake Towers

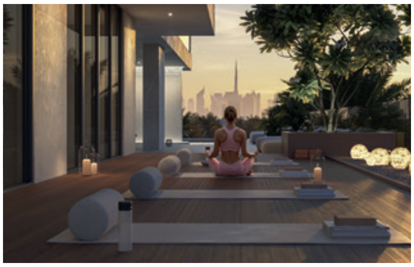
Luxury meets convenience in this bright and spacious apartment with maid's room, which offers a generous layout, premium finishes, and superb location just steps from the metro. Fully upgraded and fully furnished, it's also a fantastic investment option with the added bonus of a large balcony with Marina skyline and sea views. ***To find out more, call me quoting the reference code AP747906 RERA Permit No. 7119648600***

Bed: 2 **Bath:** 3 **Parking:** 1 **Size:** 1,658 sqft

An exclusive family address

Leading Indian luxury real estate developer Panchshil crafts a Dubai Islands family-first community where privacy and prestige co-exist in perfect harmony

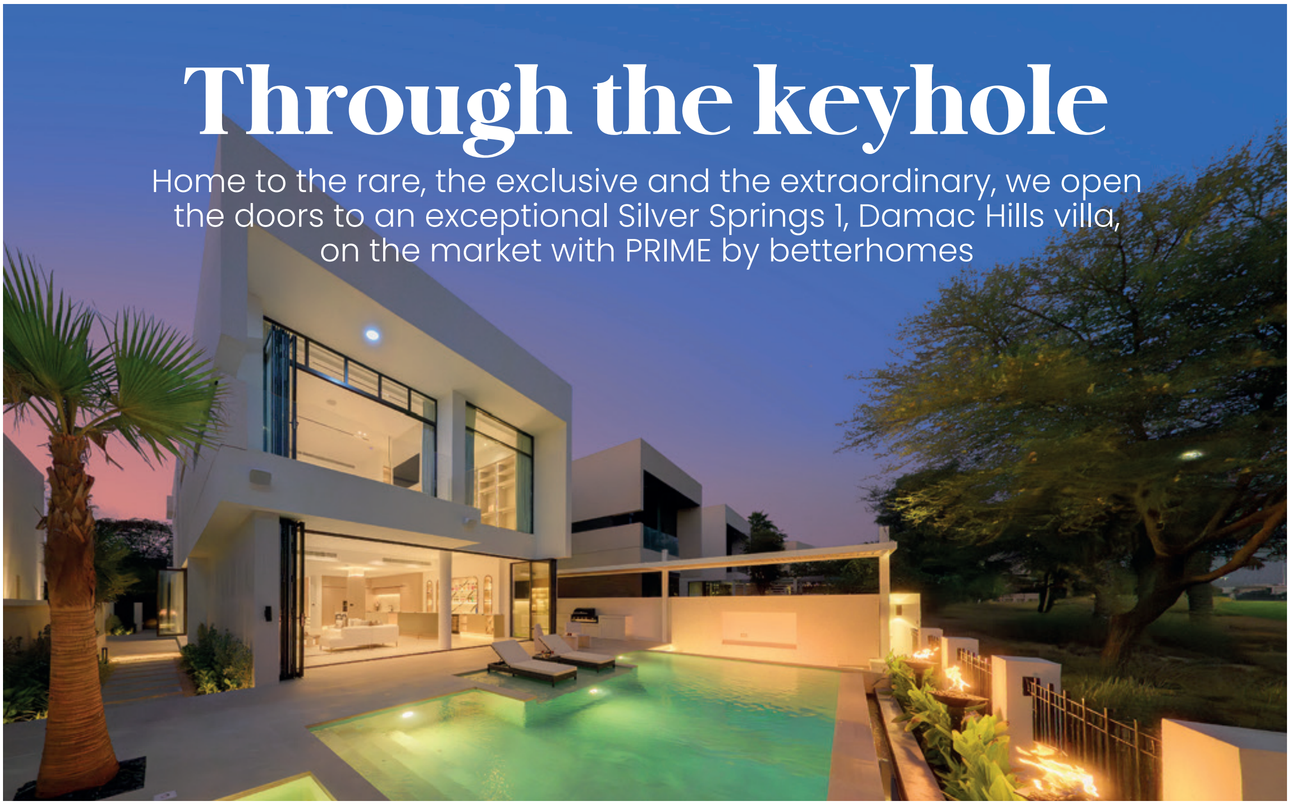
An exclusive collection of three and four-bedroom apartments created for an elite community of discerning residents, 42 East Residences brings Panchshil's acclaimed design-forward philosophy to the sought-after Dubai Islands archipelago. With just 42 exclusive - and expansive - units, this boutique community has been imagined from a desire to foster togetherness and infuses a sense of serenity throughout its refined spaces and shared amenities. The only three and four-bedroom apartment residence on Dubai Islands, Panchshil has transported the essence of its multi award-winning lifestyle philosophy to the city's newest shoreline destination. Architecture and interiors aficionados will appreciate the balance of contemporary minimal forms with traditional materials that evoke the warmth and calm only a home can provide. The unit layouts offer generous living spaces complemented by extended balconies that draw in the natural light and look out over the lush surrounds and Arabian Gulf waters. An exceptional collection of bespoke amenities occupies an entire floor, guiding the Panchshil experience outdoors, and including an infinity edge pool, curated spa spa, yoga and meditation deck, fitness hub, barbecue zones, clubhouse and shaded play areas. A collective wellness offering, each space supports connection, relaxation and the ultimate in expected comfort. Boutique island living, just minutes from the beach, 42 East Residences celebrates the beauty of perfectly executed minimalist design, refined down to the smallest element, and crafted with Panchshil's legendary commitment to precision and detail. Discover boutique island living on Dubai Islands.



For more information, scan the QR code or call 800 42 EAST.

Through the keyhole

Home to the rare, the exclusive and the extraordinary, we open the doors to an exceptional Silver Springs 1, Damac Hills villa, on the market with PRIME by betterhomes



Ticking all the boxes for an ultra-premium lifestyle, this stunning limited-edition villa lies at the heart of the sought-after Damac Hills community. If you're looking for a move-in ready property that has been designed down to the final exacting detail then this contemporary home has to be worthy of consideration.

A fully upgraded five-bedroom residence, that all-important first impression doesn't disappoint with the grand double-height all-glass atrium entrance guaranteeing an instant wow moment.

Bathed in an abundance of natural light across every square inch of space, the refined minimalistic design allows each custom feature to shine, as a showcase for creativity and superb taste.

This is only amplified as you explore the ground floor where expansive open-plan living is delivered with exquisite contemporary design flair. Highlights include the one-of-a-kind retro aesthetic bar fronted by bifold doors that open onto the private pool and breathtaking golf course views.

Upstairs is no less impressive with the five-star hotel inspired double-sized master bedroom featuring an eternal fireplace and suspended entertainment centre; a private sauna and steam room; and yet more captivating fairway views.

A highly prized location with fast and convenient access to the city's major thoroughfares, the biggest challenge you'll face is whether to play a quick nine holes before heading to the office.

Need to know

- 5,499 square feet
- 5 bedrooms
- 6 bathrooms
- Infinity pool and jacuzzi
- Golf course views
- Barbecue and entertainment area
- Built-in premium Siemens kitchen appliances
- Fully furnished with custom furniture

Reference code VI565308S
RERA Permit No. 6511604008
Price: AED 16 million

Meet the designer

Give your home
the professional touch

Arezia Zugno

Ambiente Interiors by Arezia, *@ambientebyarezia*

An Italian designer with a global mindset and deep-rooted passion for spaces that inspire, Arezia draws from years of international experience in the creative industries to blend European elegance, modern sensibility, and intentional design into every project. Her intuitive eye for beauty, meticulous attention to detail, and deeply personal approach delivers spaces that are crafted not just to be aesthetically stunning, but to feel harmonious, purposeful, and entirely bespoke.

Nabil Sherif

NGS Architects, *@ngsarchitects*

A RIBA-qualified architect, Nabil's is redefining design excellence in the region. Delivering innovative, end-to-end design and build solutions across architecture, interiors, and landscape design, he enhances user experiences through the thoughtful use of colour, materials, spatial levels, and form. Creativity, quality, and unwavering client support is his hallmark, backed by a bold, out-of-the-box approach that extends beyond the boundaries of conventional design.

Ria Karapatakis

JCT Contracting, *@jct.contracting*

Together with her husband, Ria co-founded JCT Contracting to make a real impact in people's lives by pushing the boundaries of what's possible, delivering cutting-edge products and services that simplify and enhance daily life. With a background in aerospace engineering, her lifelong passion for purposeful design and craftsmanship ensures each project delivers an enjoyable, collaborative client experience backed by quality execution, fluid communication and unparalleled efficiency.

Seher Karaca

Villa Number Nine, *@villanumbernine*

The founder and creative vision behind boutique interior design studio Villa Number Nine, Seher is known for her elegant, approachable style. Her philosophy of design is to blend natural materials and refined details through a deeply personalised process, to create spaces that feel both beautiful and lived in. She loves getting to know her clients, listening to their stories, and translating them into thoughtfully designed homes that reflect who they are.

Meet Your Maker

Luca Dal Molin

Passionate about woodworking, Luca Dal Molin launched The Makers Society (*@dubaimakerssociety*) as a fully equipped creative hub where artisans and aspiring woodworkers of all ages can learn, make, and express their artistry.

An A380 pilot who traded the cockpit for the workshop, Luca's love of woodworking began in his early twenties. "I've always been fascinated by the idea of making things with my own hands," he says. That curiosity eventually became a calling. During the pandemic, Luca, his wife, and their baby daughter moved to Scotland so he could study at the Chippendale International School of Furniture and explore a future built around his passion.

Dubai, however, called them back. "We love living here, and we saw an opportunity to open a makers' space where people could learn and train in woodworking; but there was nowhere at the time for them to explore this," he explains. In 2023, The Makers Society launched with a two-day introductory course - and quickly grew. Designers, architects, hobbyists and complete beginners found their way to the studio, with Luca also offering children's classes. "As the son of two teachers, I love education. Knowledge is power, and sharing it is incredibly fulfilling."

Dubai's creative energy proved the ideal backdrop. "It's a multicultural city without limits. The architecture alone shows how free expression is embraced. An enterprise like ours would be far harder to start in Europe," he says.

Alongside classes, The Makers Society crafts bespoke pieces for clients who appreciate the beauty and meaning of handcrafted woodwork. "We want to nurture talent and allow artistic expression. You can see that in the pieces on display - they show the breadth of what we do."

For Luca, woodworking taps into something primal. "Humans have worked with wood for millennia. It's in our DNA. In our increasingly digital world, it's important that we keep the connection to making something real with our hands." He sees it every day as students put their phones aside and focus solely on the timber.

Why choose handcrafted over mass-produced? "Because it expresses your personality," he answers. "Bespoke isn't just making a cabinet or table, it's transforming an idea into an emotional journey, understanding the sentiment behind a piece, and creating something to last a lifetime - something to pass on."

From cutting boards to toys to major furniture pieces, the team thrives on challenge. Luca personally gravitates toward cabinets and chairs, which are "technically demanding, but incredibly rewarding."

Looking to the future, Luca dreams of expanding the brand name and reach. "I want The Makers Society to be a recognised centre of craftsmanship and education, and not just in the UAE. We want to be the go-to destination for makers everywhere."

MOOD BOARD
MATERIALS
FLOOR PLAN
FURNITURE
WALL ELEVATION
Family Living Room Project
Warmth
Memories
Nature
Modern Chinois
The Elysain Dining

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